

WHITE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ON THEIR EXPERIENCES AS
TUTORS IN AN URBAN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM:
A CRITICAL RACE THEORY ANALYSIS
A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
BY
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BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

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BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study investigated the learning experiences of White pre-service teachers who were dispatched to serve as tutors at an urban Afterschool Program in which all of the enrolled students were Black/African American. The sophomore level pre-service teachers served as tutors to fulfill a required experiential learning component for an introductory multicultural course. This study examined the contents of the reflective journals they kept for twelve weeks. Based on the contents of the journals, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What do White pre-service teachers focus on in the critical reflective process?
2. What are the White pre-service teachers' personal assumptions about teaching, learning and interacting with African American students?
3. How do White pre-service teachers express their understanding of the impact of race on the teaching and learning process?
4. What do White pre-service teachers learn in afterschool tutoring programs in urban settings in which all students are Black/African American?

This qualitative study is a narrative inquiry that used archived data from the written reflections of nine White pre-service teachers. The narrative reflections were crafted in response to a series of prompts based on Brookfield's (1995) approach to assisting teachers in the process of reflection. The findings from this study revealed that the White pre-service teachers had a spectrum of learning experiences. The focus of their reflections were on teaching techniques, behavior/discipline issues and the importance of relationships. While many appeared to learn that their initial deficit model assumptions

about the Black/African American students were unfounded, they did not fully recognize the cultural wealth within the students' community. They learned that creative teaching methods that were culturally responsive fostered better learning experiences for both the White pre-service teachers and the Black/African American students. Also, engagement in meaningful learning activities diminished behavior and discipline problems. While the White pre-service teachers made inroads in the dispelling of their preconceptions, they appeared color-blind by their lack of reflection on race. Also, they appeared to support Critical Race Theory's definition of the master narrative in their failure to recognize and critique schooling as a racial stratification system.

Table of Contents

Approval	i
Title Page	ii
Copyright	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Dedication	viii
Abstract	ix
Table of Contents	xi
Chapter One	1
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Problem	5
Statement of the Problem.....	12
Purpose of the Study	12
Theoretical Basis for the Study.....	13
Significance - Rationale/Justification	16
Assumptions and Limitations of the Study	18
Researcher Perspective	20
Definition of Terms.....	23
Organization of the Remainder of the Study	25
Chapter Two.....	26
Literature Review.....	26
Introduction.....	26
Teacher Education - Hovering at the Macro Level.....	26

Social Justice.....	29
Reflection	31
Critical Race Theory	39
<i>Racism is "Normal"</i>	41
<i>The Master Narrative</i>	44
<i>Building Blocks of the Master Narrative</i>	44
<i>Tools to Disrupt the Master Narrative</i>	45
<i>Tools to Disrupt the Master Narrative Challenged</i>	49
<i>The Myth of Meritocracy</i>	50
<i>Neutral and Color-blind</i>	51
Multicultural Education	66
Unconscious Racism	66
Whiteness	68
Multicultural Education Approaches	75
<i>Multicultural Pre-Service Teacher Preparation</i>	76
<i>Teaching the Culturally Different</i>	77
<i>Human Relations</i>	78
<i>Single Group</i>	79
<i>Multicultural Education</i>	80
<i>Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist Education</i>	80
<i>Culturally Responsive Teaching</i>	83
Summary	86
Chapter Three.....	87

Methodology	87
Description of the Methodology	89
Context.....	94
Design of the Study	100
Identification of Participants.....	101
<i>Table 1 Participant Composite</i>	102
Sample and Population	103
Data Collection	103
Journal Prompts (Assignment: Personal Culture Learning through Reflection)	105
Data Analysis	107
<i>Data Preparation.</i>	109
<i>Narrative Review</i>	110
<i>Creating Categories</i>	110
<i>Coding</i>	112
Reporting the Findings.....	112
Validity and Reliability	113
Summary	114
Chapter Four	115
Findings.....	115
Theme One: Assumptions.....	117
<i>Initial Aassumptions</i>	119
<i>Assumptions - Underestimated student potential.</i>	121
<i>Assumptions - Middle School is Easy</i>	125

<i>Assumptions - Culturally Deficient Students</i>	128
<i>Assumptions - Summary</i>	135
Counterstories Challenge Assumptions	135
Jane's Narrative	137
Jane's Narrative - A Counter Story	138
Theme Two: Teaching Techniques	142
<i>Conveyance of Events</i>	143
<i>Expanded Descriptions of Teaching Methods-Creative Approaches</i>	145
<i>Teaching Techniques that Fostered Relationships</i>	149
<i>Pitfalls and Taking Responsibility</i>	152
<i>Teaching Techniques - Summary</i>	155
Theme Three: Relationships	156
<i>Importance of Relationships</i>	157
<i>Relationships Related to Teaching and Learning</i>	158
<i>Relationships - Summary</i>	165
Theme Four: Behavior and Discipline Issues	165
<i>Discipline - The Role of the Teacher</i>	166
<i>Behavior Management Interventions</i>	168
<i>Speculations about Behavior</i>	174
<i>Behavior and Discipline Issues: Summary</i>	178
Theme Five: Race	179
<i>Color-blind</i>	180
<i>Nancy</i>	181

<i>Angel</i>	187
<i>Anne</i>	190
<i>Jane</i>	191
<i>Movie: Akeelah and the Bee</i>	196
<i>Race - Summary</i>	198
Theme Six: Supporting or Challenging the Master Narrative	200
<i>Color-blind</i>	201
<i>Normative Standards of Behavior</i>	204
<i>Tracking Sheets</i>	208
<i>Standardized Testing</i>	210
<i>The Valuation of Cultural Capital</i>	216
<i>Supporting/Challenging the Master Narrative - Summary</i>	218
Summary of Chapter Four	219
Chapter Five	220
Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations	220
Research Question One: What do White pre-service teachers focus on in the critical reflective process?	221
<i>Teaching Ttechniques</i>	224
<i>Relationships with Black/African American Students</i>	228
<i>Behavior/Discipline Issues</i>	232
Research Question Two: What are the White pre-service teachers' personal assumptions about teaching, learning, and interactin with Black/African American students?	235
<i>Initial Assumptions</i>	235

<i>Middle School Content is Easy</i>	236
<i>Underestimated Black/African American Student Potential</i>	236
<i>Culturally Deficient Students</i>	237
Research Question Three: How do White pre-service teachers express their understanding of the impact of race on the teaching and learning process?	240
<i>Color-blind Approach</i>	241
<i>Transmission of the Master Narrative</i>	241
Research Question Four: What do White pre-service teachers learn in afterschool tutoring programs in which all students are Black/African American students?	244
<i>Assumptions</i>	246
<i>Teaching and Learning</i>	247
<i>Behavior/Discipline</i>	249
<i>Relationships</i>	249
<i>Race</i>	250
Conclusions	252
Recommendations	255
References	258
Appendix A - Reflective Journal Prompts	289
Appendix B - Contact Information Form	290
Appendix C - Institutional Review Board	291
Appendix D - Email and Telephone Recruitment Scripts	292
Appendix E - Research Participant Informed Consent Form	293

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There is not a child in the country that is able to navigate his or her way into adulthood without the direct and indirect intervention of adults. Adults must respond to this reality by ensuring that those preparing to work with youth are educated with the skills and dispositions necessary to advocate and respond to young people. Young people spend the preponderance of their formative years in educational settings interacting with adults, specifically teachers. Given the overwhelming impact teachers have on the development and education of young people, it is imperative that teacher education respond with the utmost responsibility in the preparation of pre-service teachers. Given the expanding gaps in the achievement levels between White students and those of African American descent, the call for well-prepared teachers trained to teach Black/African American urban children is profound.

I am a professional with 20 years of experience working with and on the behalf of young people in a myriad of advocacy, educational and other supportive roles. One experience included serving as a site coordinator for an urban afterschool homework

assistance program. In this role, one of my responsibilities included coordinating the licensed teachers hired to assist students with homework.

During the course of my year coordinating this program, I overheard teachers making such comments as “Some of these students are a waste of space.” The teachers discussed discipline issues in terms of power struggles stating that “Our power will win over theirs”. I also witnessed “enrichment” activities in which teachers asked the students to complete the statement “I am. . .” Teachers then remarked how wonderful it was that the students were self-aware when the students identified themselves as “a troublemaker”, “lazy” and “problem-child”. I witnessed a teacher make a student beg to use the calculator she held behind her back.

Did these teachers really believe these kinds of interactions created positive learning experiences for urban students who were already struggling in school? The teachers seemingly did not realize the impact or essence of their behaviors. My decision to return to college to obtain a teaching license was precipitated by observing the quality of interactions between the licensed teachers and the students at this afterschool homework assistance program housed at an urban middle school.

After a year of teacher preparation coursework, I was excited to get into the classroom for my practicum and student teaching field experiences. My practicum assignments were located in two different urban schools. When I arrived at the first school, a strange thing happened. History was repeating itself.

One of the teachers I was assigned to observe took a few moments at the beginning of class to introduce me to the context of his urban middle school classroom.

Students were entering the classroom and could possibly have overheard the teacher make the following comments to me:

“These kids don’t get it. They don’t have middle class values so they do not turn in their work”.

Subsequent dialogue with the middle school students included the following:

“Get it straight, Cora!” Cora’s chin drops and she hits herself in the head with a folder. “After you say, ‘Duh!’ go to your locker.” “You are being rude.” “I’m trying to teach you how important homework is because by 7th and 8th grade, you’ll be a mess.” “You are gonna get an F in this class.” “I’ve got to spoon-feed you sometimes.” “Are you deaf?” “Do you think your paper is gonna fall from the sky?” “I am going to call your mother, Miss Attitude.” “I assume you can write.” “You’re not organized.” “Even an idiot can do this.” “Your desk area looks like a pigpen.” “C’mon, pokey” “I’m not babysitting.” “OK motor mouth.” “I’m not in the mood for questions. When a student arrived 45 minutes late and he was asked, “Did you stop off for a beer on the way to class?” It was 8:15 a.m.

The teacher made all of the comments within one 50-minute class period. The comments were interspersed throughout the duration of the lesson and directed at specific students.

This observational experience was part of my pre-service teacher practicum. I am quoting at length from the field notes and journal entries that were required as part of the practicum in order to capture the climate of this urban middle school classroom. Many of the students were Black/African American.

As a pre-service teacher observing this behavior, I was dumbfounded. The purpose for my practicum was to observe and learn from an experienced teacher in an urban school. I was completely amazed at the inappropriate patterns of interaction with students. The teacher's first comment regarding his perception of the students' work ethic communicate a value judgment that considers influences outside of school as detrimental to the students' abilities to submit homework. It appeared that this teacher did not recognize the potential of his students. He also did not recognize how damaging his verbal assaults were to the students. Furthermore, the sheer number of verbal attacks within one class period did not appear to create a safe learning environment for these middle school students.

I wondered about this teacher's preparation in working with urban students. I wondered about the experiences of other pre-service teachers in urban schools. I wondered if they experienced internal conflicts between what they were seeing and how they wanted to function as a teacher. I was interested in learning about their observations, experiences and perceptions during the pre-service teacher preparation process. My specific interest is in how pre-service teachers are prepared to work with urban Black/African American students.

During my practicum and student teaching experiences, I kept a reflective journal to assist me in making sense out of the things I saw, in addition to continually self-assessing my teaching performance and interactions with the students. My focus was to critically reflect on my observations and experiences to assist me in making meaning out of experiences. Those reflections were geared toward my personal and professional growth. Through those experiences and subsequent volunteerism at urban centers that

provide afterschool tutoring programs, I became interested in learning about how other pre-service teachers made meaning out of their experiences in urban environments. I wondered what they were learning about themselves and the students with whom they interacted. Additionally, I wondered what types of sentiments, value judgments and paradigms might be expressed in the reflective processes of other pre-service teachers' journals, specifically in regards to the education of urban and/or Black/African American students.

In the interest of confidentiality, all names and places have been assigned pseudonyms.

Background of the Problem

The demand for well-prepared urban teachers is increasing. According to the NCES (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007), eighty-three percent of all public school teachers are White, while seventy-five percent of the teachers in urban school environments are White females from middle-class backgrounds (NCES, 2007). In contrast, "Some 32 percent of Black, 34 percent of Hispanic, and 24 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native students were enrolled in high-poverty schools, compared with 4 percent of White and 10 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students" (NCES, 2007, ¶2). Banks (2004) refers to this as the "demographic imperative" in which the cultural and socioeconomic gaps between students and the teachers who are prepared to instruct them results in minimizing the possibility of educating all children in ways that help them reach their highest potentials.

The disparities between the unmet needs of the urban student and unprepared teacher are areas in need of further investigation. Gay (2005) describes the climate of teacher education programs by reporting:

Teacher education programs are typically designed to prepare middle-class, European American candidates to teach middle-class, European middle-class students in mainstream schools. But these conceptions do not fit the shifting demographics in U.S. schools, particularly urban communities. The dominant enrollments in many of these schools are students of color and from poverty. . . The ethnic demographics among teachers are not proportionate with the student populations. Race and culture count in significant ways in the teaching-learning process and should play a central role in the professional preparation and performance assessment of teachers. (p. 222)

Teacher education's failure to position race and culture at the center of program designs might be considered racist. The programs are crafted to meet the needs of the White European incumbent teachers with little regard for the need to prepare them for non-mainstream student populations. This means that the main focus is on the needs of the teachers as opposed to the needs of the marginalized communities of students they will be teaching. The program design favors the dominant culture at the expense of the racialized minorities.

The research on pre-service teachers reveals a general lack of sufficient preparation for their ability to adequately teach in urban schools (Sleeter, 1993; Gomez, 1996; Hodgkinson, 2000; Gay, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Cruz-Janzen, & Taylor,

2004; Delpit, 2006; Grant & Gillette, 2006). Obidah and Howard (2005) expand on the insufficiency and explain specific deficiencies by stating,

Overall, teacher candidates and beginning teachers know little about the histories and cultures of varying groups in the United States and the discrimination and disenfranchisement that they have encountered. We cannot change the students' circumstances. Our only course is to change ourselves: our preconceived (conscious and unconscious) derogatory perceptions about our students and, most important, our will to effectively educate our students. Today more than ever, there is a need for teachers who can effectively serve diverse student populations. The role of teacher education programs in preparing such teachers is vital. . . . These areas of growth should begin when teachers enter credentialed programs. (p. 251-252)

Delpit (2006) not only recognizes the abovementioned deficit in adequate urban pre-service teaching preparation, but makes the additional point that pre-service teaching programs may be the only opportunity teachers have to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to work in a multicultural setting. Teachers already in school settings may only receive limited opportunities for training in diversity referred to as “dog and pony shows”. But such experiences do not afford them the opportunity to meld the components of theory, practice, reflection, and technique adjustment during the training process (Cruz-Janzen & Taylor, 2004).

Failure to recognize and respond to this deficit in teacher education is another illustration of how racism is perpetuated in the educational system. First, pre-service teachers bring little knowledge about other cultures. Their foundational information bases

are constructed on skewed historical and cultural “truths” that herald the dominant culture as the norm and authoritative voice. Failure to address this results in reifying the worldviews and perspectives of the White dominant culture. This reification does not allow the opportunity for White pre-service teachers to dislodge the assumptions they bring to the learning environment. It results in the perpetuation of racism on both a systemic and individual level. In order to confront this, teacher education must be sensitized to the endemic nature of racism and include it as a factor in preparing teachers to confront this dilemma, a dilemma that ultimately damages both teachers and students.

The preparation of prospective teachers is a complex process. Preparing culturally responsive teachers requires additional elements of sensitivity. “Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p.106). According to Swartz and Bakari (2005), inner-city students bring specific cultural orientations and behaviors into the classroom. This includes diversity in patterns of language and socialization. Due to the cultural gaps between teachers and students, along with the lack of attention to these issues during teacher preparation, misinterpretations, such as labeling learners as “at risk” of academic failure; misidentification of special needs (including gifted); and severe disciplinary actions and punishment (Swartz & Bakari, 2005).

According to Obidah and Howard (2005), “Clearly, racial and cultural differences between teachers and students contribute to the ways in which teachers view students’ behaviors as disruptive as well as teachers’ perceptions of their ability to effectively serve the needs of these students” (p. 251). In order to confront this dilemma, it is important to

adequately prepare teachers for the diverse populations with which they will be working. If this is not addressed, practicing teachers will be at a loss when confronted with these issues in the classroom.

In-service teachers' responses to a national survey revealed that they are less likely to have participated in professional development that focused on addressing the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (41 percent). Although 71% of teachers most often reported feeling very well prepared to maintain order and discipline in the classroom, they were less likely to report feeling very well prepared to implement new methods of teaching (45 percent) and address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (32 percent) (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2000).

The NCES report of inadequate preparation to implement new teaching methods and address the needs of diverse students highlights the need for assessment and assistance in these areas. Pre-service teaching provides an opportunity to assist in the amelioration of this issue. Obidah and Howard (2005) concur in their statement, "The university teacher education classroom may be the only space where teachers can explore these issues and dilemmas and work toward viable solutions" (p. 251). The time to prepare teachers is during their pre-service field experiences where they may begin to obtain the experiences they need to develop and hone their methods.

The recognition of the need for well-trained urban educators also comes from the pre-service teaching population. Cruz-Janzen & Taylor (2004) conducted a study which explored White pre-service teachers' ways of understanding and valuing students from diverse backgrounds. Their findings revealed that most students indicated a lack of

awareness about multicultural issues, but indicated a strong desire to learn. Additional voices of pre-service professionals request more field experiences combined with multicultural education courses. Although sixty-six percent of the students reported thorough coverage of diversity related knowledge, only forty-seven percent had engaged in cultural field experiences available to them during the duration of their education (Brown, 2004). These reports reveal that teaching candidates understand that they lack the experiences and knowledge bases necessary to ensure adequate preparation for their success in urban environments or work with students of color. Furthermore, they assert that field experiences including interaction with students from cultures other than their own might provide opportunities for better understandings that might subsequently help them in their future classrooms.

“One of the most prominent issues now is the disparities in achievement of students from different ethnic groups and how they are affected by the preparation and proficiency of the classroom teacher” (Gay, 2005, p. 222). Pre-service education for teachers must address the harsh reality that education for ethnic minorities is still not conducted on a level playing field. Achievement gaps between ethnic groups do, in fact, exist. Black-White gaps in mathematics and reading achievement appeared at every grade studied. Even for children with similar levels of prior achievement one or two grades earlier, mathematics and reading scores of Blacks/African Americans students were generally lower than the corresponding scores of Whites. These findings imply that Black/African American-White disparities in educational achievement can widen as students progress through elementary or secondary school (NCES, 2000). This schism

begins early in the Black/African American child's educational experience and continues throughout the duration of his/her years in school.

Moreover, the subtitle of a report prepared by the Department of Education is as follows: "Racial/Ethnic groups' curricular rigor and GPAs are increasing. Black graduates have closed the gap with White graduates at the midlevel curriculum" (NCES, 2005, p. 26). The subtitle creates the illusion that progress is being made. However, after further investigation into the details of the content of the report, it is revealed that there are higher rates of early withdrawals from school, and lower waged occupations in the adult years for Black/African Americans. Additionally, White graduates earned higher GPAs than Black/African American or Hispanic graduates from 1990 through 2005. The most recent NCES (2005) report reveals that "Whites continued to complete a rigorous curriculum at a higher rate than Black graduates (eleven percent compared to six percent)" (p. 27). The reasons for the disparity in performance levels are, in part, due to lack of adequate teacher preparation combined with inadequate educational opportunities, lack of access to resources and an educational system that is not fully conscious or active in efforts to reverse these large-scale systemic consequences.

The statistics reveal that minority students are receiving inadequate educational opportunities. This is a "second order effect" due to inadequate teacher preparation. According to Cervero (1988), the "Holy Grail" question in the evaluation of effective programming is the extent to which the training changes performance outcomes. While first order effects are accomplishments of those who participated in the educational experience (teacher education), the "second order effect" refers to the impact and changes of those persons once removed from the participants who received the training

(Grotelueschen, 1980) In the case of teacher preparation, the outcomes include the achievement and success of students who receive instruction from teachers. Frankly, the second order effect on students of color is dismal.

Statement of the Problem

In light of poor achievement of students in urban schools and an ill-prepared teaching workforce, it is imperative that today's pre-service teachers become equipped with the skills necessary to serve this growing population. In order to obtain those skills, it is imperative to understand what White pre-service teachers are learning in urban educational settings, specifically in regard to working with Black/African American students. Through written reflections of White pre-service teachers, we might better understand how they see themselves in the role of teacher; express their worldviews in relation to Black/African American students; and ultimately construct knowledge about themselves and their students as they prepare to enter the teaching profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how White pre-service teachers construct knowledge and make meaning out of their experiences while serving as tutors at an after school tutoring program in which 100% of the students are Black/African American. What are White pre-service teachers learning when they are dispatched into urban community settings in which they are the racialized minority? More specifically, is racism imbedded in their journal entries through their reflections?

Through an analysis of their reflective journals, this study will provide information about the learning experiences of pre-service teaching candidates in an

environment in which they are the racialized minority and the students are all Black/African American.

This study sought to understand the following research questions:

1. What do White pre-service teachers focus on in the critical reflective process?
2. What are the White pre-service teachers' personal assumptions about teaching, learning and interacting with African American students?
3. How do White pre-service teachers express their understanding of the impact of race on the teaching and learning process?
4. What do White pre-service teachers learn in afterschool tutoring programs in urban settings in which all students are Black/African American?

Theoretical Basis for the Study

Constructivism and Critical Race Theory (CRT) anchor and guide the design and implementation of this study. Constructivism serves as the macro-level framework; while Critical Race Theory provides a more narrowly focused lens on the specificity of pre-service teacher knowledge construction in regard to race and social justice issues.

Furthermore, CRT interfaces with the constructivist paradigm and expands it to embrace constructivism. While constructivism focuses on the individuals' learning experiences, constructionism recognizes that these individual learning experiences do not occur in a vacuum impervious of the impact of the social context in which learning occurs.

Construction of knowledge is influenced by society.

According to Windschitl (2000), in constructivism

[L]earners actively create and restructure knowledge, constantly comparing ideas introduced in formal instruction to their existing knowledge, which has been assembled from personal experiences, the intellectual, cultural, and social contexts in which these ideas occur, and a host of other influences that serve to mediate understanding. (p. 99)

The White pre-service teachers will construct new knowledge throughout the community-based experience. The potential exists for the White pre-service teachers to restructure knowledge by comparing ideas they bring with them from formative experiences, possibly re-shape those ideas as a result of their exposure to the multicultural education course materials in addition to an added layer of learning via new experiences during the lab experience in which they are dispatched as tutors in an urban environment.

The first theme of constructivism is “centrality of the learner” as the “student’s lived experiences are powerful frameworks of reference that allows them to compare new concepts with what they already know and to give these concepts meaning” (Windschitl, 2000, p. 98). Pre-service teachers bring implicit and explicit beliefs about urban students into the classroom. It is from this center that subsequent learning occurs. As pre-service students, functioning as tutors, move through a community-based tutoring program, they acquire additional knowledge and experiences that build on their pre-existing beliefs.

The second theme, “complexity” is engaged when pre-service teachers participate in the community based learning activities. A complex inquiry investigates ideas from various perspectives (Windschitl, 2000). Complexity is illustrated through the reflective journaling process. Through this process, pre-service teachers have the opportunity to express a wide range of insights and observations regarding the specifics of what they

learn and experience in the community based setting. The production of learning journals assist them in examining the complexities of the observations and interactions with urban students. By interacting with this new information, “Learners [become] capable agents of knowledge production, rather than passive consumers of information” as they “identify problems and issues and approaches to tasks that are relevant to their lives and individual frames of reference” (Windschitl, 2000, p.98). This is accomplished through pre-service teachers’ journals.

The final theme of “engagement” is accomplished by “experiencing the content they are studying” (Windschitl, 2000, p. 98). This theme suggests that the White pre-service teachers are engaging with the content of their introduction to multicultural education course with the opportunity of experiencing the content in a lab experience. The pre-service teachers who are predominantly White and middle class are dispatched into an urban setting at an Black/African American church and have the opportunity to interact with a population to which they may not have otherwise been exposed. By virtue of the nature of the interaction with and tutoring of Black/African American urban middle school students, White pre-service teachers will be experiencing the content of the multicultural education course they are studying. Thus, they will have had a learning experience grounded in constructivism.

As the White pre-service teachers constructed knowledge based on this new experience, they recorded their experiences and what they learned in weekly journals. The pre-service teachers documented how they processed this new learning in written narrative form. This study analyzed the data in these journals to understand and describe the essence of those experiences described in the narratives.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) in teacher education research foregrounds race and racism (Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002). The choice to employ a CRT framework was an epistemological necessity. Scheurich & Young (1997) assert that “White researchers are unconsciously promulgating racism. . . by excluding alternative epistemologies, such as CRT” (p. 11). For the purposes of this study, constructivism is partnered with CRT in order to understand how pre-service teachers construct knowledge with attention to race, racism and ancillary issues pertaining to social justice.

CRT offers the lens with which to explore White pre-service teacher knowledge construction that might potentially contribute to inequalities that plague historically marginalized students, specifically, Black/African American students. In this study, the White pre-service teachers are members of the dominant culture; thus, the “centrality of the learner” in this situation means that they are in positions of power. This position of power allows for the production of a collective narrative. One of the tenets of CRT supports the “deconstruction of the master narrative” (Love, 2006, p. 244). The narratives in the White pre-service teachers’ journals will be reviewed and analyzed with attention to Critical Race Theory, and how they make meaning out of their experiences

Significance - Rationale/Justification

The rationale for this study is based on the need for more information regarding how White pre-service teachers process their learning experiences in settings that are different than their own. Specifically, White middle class students dispatched into urban settings process their experiences within personal frames of reference based on their previous experiences. Those educational experiences have not traditionally taken place in urban environments. Consequently, the lenses they use to process their experiences may

be clouded with assumptions about their experiences with less sensitivity to this unique population. It is important for teacher educators to understand how pre-service teachers are constructing knowledge and reflecting on their experiences in urban settings. Teacher education will be better equipped to prepare new teachers with the skills necessary to teach in urban settings and help them in becoming culturally competent when working with a historically marginalized population, such as Black/African American students. Well-prepared teachers will be in a better position to meet the needs of historically marginalized populations. This could result in improved achievement levels of Black/African American students.

By exploring the nature of White pre-service teachers' self-reflections about their roles, insights and performance in an urban after school program, the field of education benefits. Teacher educators will have a better understanding of how to identify and address the needs of the White pre-service teachers and assist them in developing the cultural competencies necessary to effectively meet the needs of Black/African American students. Furthermore, teacher educators might find this information useful in designing multicultural education field experiences. Finally, teacher educators might learn more about the need to confront racism in an effort to work toward social justice. Grappling with racism on both an individual level, in addition to the larger collective teacher population, might spur teacher education on to take a more proactive role in confronting racism on both the micro level and at the institutional level.

While this Midwestern university has had a multicultural lab experience for two decades, this is the first community-based experience that is devoted to working exclusively with Black/African American middle school students in an urban setting at

this specific local Baptist Church. This project design employs narrative inquiry that deconstructs and analyzes weekly reflective journals in this contextual setting. This project will give voice to the White pre-service teachers' experiences from an analytical perspective and provide the institution with information relative to the course objectives. It will describe the relationship between practice and theory.

Another attribute is that the White pre-service teachers were dispatched for the specific purpose of tutoring and assisting urban student with their daily homework assignments. Other community-based sites focus on recreational activities with homework assistance as a secondary objective. These White pre-service teachers had the opportunity to engage with students and academic content on an individual basis for an entire semester.

Finally, in this community-based learning experience the White pre-service teacher tutors adhered to a consistent schedule; provided homework assistance on the same day each week; and worked with the same Black/African American middle school students over the course of the semester. This particular field experience design created the potential to foster deeper relationships with the middle school students than field experiences that are less structured. The construct of this type of field experience offers White pre-service teachers the opportunity to reflect on a weekly basis throughout the duration of the semester.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include my personal bias as a White middle class researcher. I am a licensed teacher with experience working in urban environments, and have witnessed behavior that I feel is unprofessional and unethical. I bring this critical

lens with me to the research process, the lens that recognizes the power differentials between students and teachers.

Teachers have the power to discern the relative “truth”, while students’ voices are generally non-existent. My heightened sensitivity to the challenges of the urban student provides me with an intensified awareness. I am able to shift my perspective to “see” the other side of the story in order to understand how the urban student is experiencing the teaching / learning processes. While this may be construed as a limitation, it is also an attribute. The ability to “see” the other side of the story is necessary to “deconstruct the master narrative” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 8). Furthermore, Kramp (2004) maintains that it is important to not overlook the value of the researchers’ perspectives because it “can lead to insights derived from a particular way of seeing things” (p. 115). The written narratives created by White pre-service teachers are the collective voice of the dominant culture. In analysis, we “move away from the factual nature of the narrator’s statements. . . and highlight the versions of self, reality, and experience” that are expressed in the reflective journals (Chase, 2005, p. 656). Deconstructing their narratives will be part of the data analysis process.

Another limitation is the fact that the reflective journals kept by the White pre-service teachers were required as part of their coursework for the field experience. They may have filtered their narratives based on what they assumed that their university instructor expected them to report. They may have provided narratives that put themselves in a positive light. Also, they received a grade based on their journal entries.

People are often resistant to revealing self-explorations of their feelings and understandings to others, especially strangers. What is revealed is

frequently meant to project a positive self-image to others; thus, participants' descriptions may have filtered out those parts of their experiences that they want to keep to themselves or that they believe will present a socially undesirable self-portrait. (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 481)

As the researcher, I reported the literal narratives excerpted from the White pre-service teachers' multicultural education course journals in the findings; however, in the analysis portion of the findings, I applied my subjectivity by employing the CRT lens to discern the parts of the narratives that support the "master narrative" or convey their deficiencies in cultural awareness, sensitivity, and/or responsiveness.

Another possible limitation is that the White pre-service teachers were approximately 19-22 years old and in their sophomore level of college, and may not have well-developed reflective skills. While they had an introductory teacher education course in which they were required to observe classrooms for 10 hours within the course of semester, it is difficult to discern if part of that assignment was coupled with training in the art of reflection.

Researcher Perspective

The researcher perspective is a component worth examination. As a doctoral student studying Adult, Community and Higher Education, I conducted the study. My background includes over twenty years of experience working with and on the behalf of young people in community-based educational and advocacy programs in both urban and rural settings. Additionally, I am certified to teach grades 6-12 in the area of sociology. My disciplinary perspective channels my interpretations of cultural contexts. I completed both my practicum and student teaching experiences in urban environments. I am from a

White middle class background and attended a suburban school near a major urban center in the Midwest. I, too, bring my educational experiences from the White middle class environments in which I was raised. While I would like to think I have outgrown the biases with which I was raised, and transcended prejudices through the virtue of my professional and educational experiences, I must remember that this country is permeated with racism. It has and is historically, socially and politically constructed by the dominant culture of which I am a member and participant. I am certainly not immune to the influence of the indoctrination of this dominant culture.

Within that dominant culture, I have been privileged. I have had access to information and opportunity to observe the dominant culture in action. By way of my privileged pigmentation, I have seen and heard conversations that might not have been voiced if I had been a person of color. Sometimes I speak up; sometimes I don't.

In an explanation of the researcher perspective, it must be noted that I served as the education coordinator at the local Baptist Church working in tandem with the pre-service teachers dispatched as tutors. I was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program. I straddled two roles, one as program coordinator accountable to the local Baptist Church youth minister, the other as a graduate assistant accountable to my supervisor at the Midwestern University. The class met twice a week for an hour and a half. I attended the first two class meetings on campus as part of the multicultural education students' orientation to the community based lab experience. I was required to work 20 hours a week in this dual role.

My responsibilities included weekly reports to my university supervisor, supervision of the multicultural education students dispatched to the local Baptist Church,

and coordinating the efforts of an on-site lead tutor employed as a work-study student. My other responsibilities required communication with the parents and primary caregivers of the middle school students who attended the Afterschool Program.

I had access to the multicultural education students' weekly journals throughout their pre-service tutoring experience. I worked with the Midwestern university professor who facilitated the class and communicated with her on a regular basis. I attended planning and evaluative meetings with both of my supervisors as needed.

While I worked to support the learning of the pre-service teachers in the multicultural education course, my primary objective was to work on behalf of the academic success of the middle school students who attended the program. This means that, when necessary, I intervened to address issues that occurred on site throughout the semester by sharing information with the professor. My observations were focused primarily on the students attending Afterschool Program to ensure that they had adequate homework assistance and completed their assignments.

I bring a unique lens to this project. The culmination of my experiences outlined in the "researcher perspective" section shapes and influences this project. First, over twenty years of experience with young people positions me as a fierce advocate working on their behalf. I have been employed in enough social institutions to recognize that sometimes policies come before people, thus, I bring a critical lens with me that looks at how policies impact people. My sociology background has helped broaden my cultural sensitivities. As a licensed teacher who obtained the credential through an alternative certification program, I am steadfast in recognizing alternative knowledge bases that include experiential and local knowledge to be as/or more valuable as/than traditional

institutionalized educational institutions. My worldview supports the need for taking a proactive stance in working for social justice in the field of education as well as in all social institutions.

Definition of Terms

Culture: “Socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought” (Spring, 2004, p. 3).

Dominant culture: “The culture of the most powerful members of society” (Spring, 2004, p. 3).

Ethnic Group: “A microcultural group or collectivity that shares a common history and culture, values, behaviors and other characteristics that cause members of the group to have a shared identity” (Banks & Banks, 2004a, p. 449.)

Racism: A system of exclusion and privilege based on race “involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals” (Wellman, 1993; Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967; Tatum, 1999, p. 127).

Prejudice: “A preconceived judgment or opinion, usually based on false information” (Tatum, 1999, p. 126.)

Discrimination: “The differential treatment of individuals and groups based on categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, or exceptionality” (Banks & Banks, 2004, 449).

Race: “The concept of race as used by the Census Bureau reflects self-identification by people according to the race or races with which they most closely identify. These categories are sociopolitical constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or

anthropological in nature. Furthermore, the race categories include both racial and national-origin groups” (U.S. Census, 2000).

Racial categorizations: The identification of both Whites and Black/African Americans is static, and is “shaped by broader social forces. . . [and given] meaning by the specific social and historical context in which they are embedded” (Omi & Winant, 2003, p. 14).

White: “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "White" or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Black/African American: “A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "Black, African Am., or Negro," or provide written entries such as African American, Afro American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Borrowing from Tillman (2002) in order to justify the use of employing the terms *Black* and *African American* interchangeably. These identifying terms include African Americans and others people of African descent in the United States. I refer to Black/African Americans as a group with a distinct culture: “as a group's individual and collective ways of thinking, believing, and knowing, which includes their shared experiences, consciousness, skills, values, forms of expression, social institutions, and behaviors” (Tillman, 2002, p. 4). While there is a shared cultural knowledge within the Black/African American community, there is also respect for the consideration of the commonalities and differences within community.

Multicultural education: A reform movement with the goal of restructuring “schools and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class

groups will experience educational equity” (Banks & Banks, 2004b, p. 3; Banks, 1981; Gay, 1995; Grant & Sleeter, 1997).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter two includes a literature review. This review highlights information about pre-service teacher education in relation to the needs of urban students and Black/African American students. It offers a look at the importance of reflection and the various means by which reflection occurs in teacher education, particularly in relation to preparing teachers to work in urban settings or environments different than their own. Furthermore, it addresses the tenets of Critical Race Theory as they pertain to education and teacher preparation. It closes with a summary that indicates the need for research about the learning experiences of White pre-service teachers in urban environments and work with Black/African American students.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology. This chapter includes the purpose of the study and the nature of its design. The design description describes the sample and sources of data. The data collection procedures are outlined, along with the methods by which the data was analyzed.

Chapter four is a presentation of the findings. The findings are organized based on the identified themes. This chapter also shares excerpts from the White pre-service teachers’ narratives.

Chapter five provides discussion, re-states and answers the research questions. It also includes conclusions based on the findings, followed by recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand how White pre-service teachers construct knowledge and make meaning out of their experiences while serving as tutors at an after school tutoring program in which 100% of the students were Black/African American. The usefulness of the findings might better prepare future teachers in working with these and other historically marginalized populations. By understanding how pre-service teachers are processing their experiences, we work for social justice by ensuring that that pre-service teachers, who will someday be in classrooms, are provided with an approach to teaching that is responsive to and inclusive of the needs of all students.

Teacher Education – Hovering at the Macro Level

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) was created in 1987 as body of state and national organizations “dedicated to the reform of the preparation, licensing, and on-going professional development of teachers” (INTASC, 1992). Its function is based on the premise that “an effective teacher must be able to

integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that *all* students learn and perform at high levels” (INTASC, 1992). In order to ensure student learning, teachers are expected to explore ways to support and connect with the needs of all students. Preparing teachers with the skills, knowledge and dispositions that will enable them to meet the needs of all students, requires us to explore pre-service teacher education with focused attention to social justice.

NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) highlights the importance of the advancement of social justice in the field of education. NCATE recognizes that “many children in urban and rural schools do not have access to well-prepared teachers.” This results in “an unacceptable achievement gap based on race, ethnicity, disability/exceptionality and socioeconomic status” NCATE, 2008, ¶1).

NCATE states that the achievement gap is perpetuated because some children have well-prepared teachers, and others do not. In order to close the achievement gap, NCATE asserts that teachers must meet rigorous standards that demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to work “with children of all races, ethnicities, disabilities/exceptionalities and socioeconomic groups” (¶5). Specifically, teacher education programs must prepare candidates who:

- have the content knowledge needed to teach students;
- have the pedagogical and professional knowledge needed to teach effectively;
- can operationalize the belief that all students can learn;
- demonstrate fairness in educational settings by meeting the educational needs of all students in a caring, non-discriminatory, and equitable manner;
- understand the impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender,

disability/exceptionality,

sexual orientation, and language on students and their learning; and

- can apply their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in a manner that facilitates student learning (NCATE, 2008, ¶6)

Exploring teacher education and its relationship to social justice goes well beyond simply listing standardized requirements for teacher certification. Teacher education must move beyond these guidelines and explore how they translate into practice. How institutions interpret the NCATE mandate determines their visions and the design of teacher education programs. Thus, it is appropriate to deconstruct the language, intent, and the means by which these standards are operationalized in teacher education, particularly how they assess whether or not a teacher is prepared to work with Black/African American students and other historically marginalized populations. In defining outcomes in teacher education,

a central challenge is how to prepare teacher candidates who can demonstrate what some consider 'best' instructional practices, but also know how to challenge those practices when they exclude certain children or fail to serve particular groups of students. How will we prepare teachers who know how to 'fit' into tightly aligned standards-driven schools and school systems, but also know how to raise questions about whose interests are being served, whose needs are being met, and whose are *not* being met by those systems? (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 206)

Processes, policies and procedures purportedly designed to address the needs of diverse populations through teacher education, deserve a critical interrogation in order to

understand how the NCATE guidelines are operationalized so that all of the stakeholders in education are positioned to work for the common purpose of social justice and meeting the needs of all students. While teacher education appears to be moving forward in addressing the need to work prepare teachers for work in diverse classroom settings, it is important to reflect on the socio-political and historical machinations that have brought NCATE to its recent “Call to Action” and declaration that “social justice demands that appropriate action to fulfill the promise that assures “high quality education for all children” (§3). The remainder of this chapter is devoted to an exploration of teacher education and the challenges of preparing teachers to work toward social justice to ensure that they are well-prepared to meet the educational needs of all children.

Social Justice

Conceptualizations of social justice influence program design and pre-service teacher education. “There is no neutral language available. . . when we seek to explain what we mean by social justice. . . [the simple words used indicate] particular ideological meanings and intentions” (Sandretto et al., 2007, p. 317). Ideology and meaning fuel action in practice and purpose, particularly in various contextual settings. Before teacher educators can infuse a stance of social justice into the preparation of pre-service teachers, it would be wise to participate in a discourse that identifies what it means and how it will be applied. Does working for social justice take on a paternalistic flavor or a posture of liberation? Does social justice address the needs of the individual or the needs of society? How institutions position themselves in terms of vision, mission, and ideology determines how working for social justice is operationalized, in that institution. Each stance provides the foundation for different approaches to the address of social justice.

While this may appear to be semantic hair-splitting, the variation in these approaches will determine how teacher preparation programs and pre-service teachers understand and subsequently incorporate social justice into their curricula in order to teach all children well. One example of positionality is as follows. A worldview that employs a paternalistic approach might advocate on behalf of the individual as if the individual was not capable of advocating on his/her own behalf. This approach might identify an underachieving student as an oppressed victim, relegating them to positions of powerlessness. In contrast, a counter hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) approach would be to reconceptualize the “victim” as a group of people who are powerful agents of change fully capable of their own liberation recognized as a people with the cultural capital to contribute to their own progress and also to society at large (Freire, 1974). Within this minute example, lie three themes: perception, position and power. Working toward social justice in the preparation of pre-service teachers requires that we grapple with and deconstruct these concepts as they relate to teacher education. In dissecting them, through the lens provided by Critical Race Theory, we are able to explore how these themes work for and against preparing teachers.

McLaren (1998) describes the role of the teacher as a social agent who helps students analyze power, particularly the power imbalances in all social contexts. According to Cochran-Smith (1991), “teachers need to know from the start that they are a part of a larger struggle and that they have a responsibility to reform, not just replicate, standard school practices” (p. 280). Cochran-Smith (1991) argues that this is not a generic skill that can be learned at the university and then applied at the school.

Embracing the stance as an agent of change in teacher education often begins with reflection in a context that fosters reflection on many levels.

Reflection

The art of reflection is an important component to teacher education. INTASC Principle #9 requires that teachers function as reflective practitioners and defines a reflective practitioner as one who “continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally” (Council of Chief State School Officers). “Rational, reflective decision making is the basic teaching skill that, fully developed, is essential to optimally effective teaching” (Wilén, Bosse, Hutchison & Kindsvatter, 2004, p. 21). It is paramount that pre-service teachers are groomed in the art of reflection.

Pre-service teachers must understand the importance of reflection. Dewey (1933) informs us of the importance between skill and attitude regarding reflection. He suggests that methods of inquiry alone are not adequate, but must be accompanied by an attitude of desire. The pre-service teacher must be open-minded with “an active desire to listen” to more than one side, fully attentive to other possibilities. Habits of mind that are unwilling to consider new ideas “shut out new conceptions. . . and keep us from making new observations” (Dewey, 1933, p. 30). Pre-service teacher learning is enhanced when they understand the importance of receptivity to new perspectives.

Pre-service teacher reflection has many definitions in the field of education. One way of delineating various levels of reflection was conceived by Van Manen (1977). He proposes three levels of reflectivity: the technical rational, practical action, and critical reflection.

The first of three levels identified by Van Manen (1977) is the technical rational. The focus of this level of reflection is on the “efficient and effective application of knowledge” (p. 225). According to Farrell (2004), this is the normal level of reflection for pre-service teachers. This level of reflection focuses on the technical aspects of teaching such as, surface types of observations of self and others. Schon (1988) refers to this as “technical rational” or the “generic tradition that simply emphasizes thinking about what we are doing without attention to the quality or substance of that thinking” (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 52). Pre-service teachers must move beyond this level and recognize the value of deeper contemplation.

Gay and Kirkland (2003) contend that reflection should not be confused with narrative descriptions of issues, ideas and events; stating philosophical beliefs; or sharing summary statements made by scholars without consideration of racial, ethnic or cultural diversity. The danger is that pre-service teachers might repeat trends by not examining their own personal perspectives or questioning traditional explanations. Because teachers’ “practice is shaped primarily from their past experiences” (Wilén, Bosse, Hutchison & Kindsvatter, 2000, p. 15), the role of teacher education is to assist by “facilitating and negotiating meaning-making” through the “the construction and exchange of personally relevant” educational experiences (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 293 & 298).

The positionality of White pre-service teachers as members of the dominant culture, often impairs their abilities to expand to a more inclusive worldview, one that embraces alternative ways of reflecting on how they experience and construct knowledge. While this might initially be viewed as a limitation, it may also serve as an important

starting point for constructing new knowledge. This self-examination is important in that it is a premise on which to begin to explore and compare self with others from diverse backgrounds (Zeichner, 1996).

Many teacher educators support the use of autobiographies as a method of self-reflection (Zeichner, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 2000a; and Sleeter, 1993). “The construction of an educational autobiography is a helpful starting point for the pre-service teacher as a form of narrative inquiry in which prospective teachers can begin to make connections between personal experience and pedagogical beliefs” (Sharkey, 2004, p. 499).

Autobiographical writing can be used to assist pre-service teachers in “consciously re-experience[ing] their own subjectivit[ies] when they recognize similar or different outlooks and experiences” in field experiences and coursework (p. 26), both in courses and field experiences (King & Ladson-Billings, 1990).

White pre-service teachers must deconstruct and analyze their formative learning experiences in order to understand that those experiences are unique and occurred within a specific context and culture. “Left unexamined, [an educational] autobiography can become a norming practice through which the status quo is maintained” (Sharkey, 2004, p. 507).

Apple (2004) recognizes the importance of the “interrogation of our own personal motives” in order to confront the possibility of the manifestation of “possessive individualism” that privileges writers through “self display” and a position of centrism through their discussions (p. 215). Teacher education might address this by helping White pre-service teachers recognize their positions of power and privilege. This may be accomplished by making pre-service teachers aware that all learners are not afforded

equal access to opportunities and resources within school cultures. Teacher education should provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore their own cultural and personal values and biases, while informing them about racial and cultural differences of people other than themselves (Obidah & Howard, 2005). This type of self-reflection might serve to assist the pre-service teacher in recognizing his/her values, beliefs and actions and assess whether or not their beliefs and values are mirrored by the actions that they take in the classroom.

Schon (1988) also speaks to this concern in his comparison between espoused theories (beliefs) and theories-in-use (actions). Pre-service teachers are trained to reflect on their beliefs, values and theories about teaching in relation to the actions and decision they make in the classroom. They must also be educated to look for discontinuities between their professed and enacted values. They might find that there is a contrast between their stated values and how they conduct themselves in the classroom. Pre-service teachers must critique their own learning experiences in order to uncover how their ideologies about teaching and learning have been created and how those ideologies play out in the classroom.

Thus, the second level of reflection involves an examination of the theories that drive the teachers' behaviors and actions in the classroom. At this "practical action" level of reflection, the pre-service teacher must grapple with the "Why?" question. At this level, every action is seen as linked to a particular value commitment, and the pre-service teacher must consider the worth of that action to achieve the educational end (Zeichner & Liston, 1997, p. 24). "The practical then refers to the process of analyzing and clarifying individual and cultural experiences, meanings, perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments,

and presuppositions, for the purpose of orienting practical actions” (Van Manen, 1977, p. 226). At this level of reflection, the focus is on an interpretive understanding of the nature and quality of the educational experience, along with making practical choices based on those reflections (Van Manen, 1977).

This level of reflection takes into account the contextual setting, as well as the individual needs of the learners. This interpretive reflection is of particular importance when White pre-service teachers are dispatched into educational settings that differ from their own. A “culture clash” often occurs when White, middle class pre-service teachers enter urban schools. Without the benefit of structured analysis, problems are not likely to be recognized as cultural or systemic, but rather problems with the individual student, such as a “pathology. . . deprived family background, lack of work ethic, and the like” (Farber & Armaline, 1992, p. 61).

In a comparison study between White pre-service teachers with and without the opportunity for written reflection and dialogue, those participating in the reflective activity were much more likely to perceive complex issues in urban classrooms “minus the negativism and loss of idealism cited in field experience literature” (Farber & Armaline, 1992).

The Brown study (2004) published in the *Journal of Teacher Education* compared pre-service teaching experiences of two groups of junior level white teaching candidates. One group had active participation in field experiences, self-examination and guided debriefing. The other group simply observed inner city classrooms. The two groups’ written reflections were dissimilar in that one group focused on the teacher’s method of instruction and discipline and ignored the importance of classroom communication,

environment, and culture. This type of contrast was also found by Farber and Armaline (1992):

The group that experienced active classroom participation and intensive reflective experiences wrote in greater depth, with more analysis and application of a variety of issues that affect schooling success. . . . They analyzed themselves more deeply in regard to understanding their own culture and those of the students. (p.72)

The reflective process has the potential to assist pre-service teachers with attitudinal, perceptual and paradigmatic shifts necessary to prepare them for an urban school environment. Teacher educators use reflective techniques designed to implement the initial first step in “re-socializing pre-service teachers in ways that help them view themselves within a culturally diverse society” (Zeichner, 1996, p. 152).

Van Manen’s (1977) third level of reflectivity promotes critical reflection to evaluate the worth of the educational goals and experiences on the basis of justice and equality. It involves making judgments based on ethical and moral considerations. Brookfield (2000) reminds us that “Reflection, by definition is not critical” (p. 8). Recognizing power and privilege is essential and should be directly addressed in discourse (Williams, 2005). “Critical reflection transcends practical action by asking questions on the critical and moral dimension, involving concerns for justice, equity . . . and whether current arrangements serve important human needs and satisfy human purposes” (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 25).

This third level of reflection is also recognized as “the social reconstructionist version which stresses reflection about the social and political context of schooling and

the assessment of classroom actions for their ability to enhance, equity, justice and more humane conditions in our schools and society” (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 59). In this view, pre-service teachers come to recognize that instruction is imbedded within cultural, institutional and political context. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to focus on the issues that “help them examine the social and democratic consequences of their teaching by deliberating about the democratic and emancipatory practices in their classrooms” (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 59).

This level of reflection enables teachers to ask larger systemic questions that drive educational systems. Once pre-service teachers become aware of the levels of reflectivity, they are more prepared to critically examine their observations and experiences as they are dispatched into the community for the purpose of classroom observations, community-based experiences, practicum and student teaching (Gomez and Tabachnick, 1992.) Reflection can be a powerful tool in the preparation of pre-service teachers. It can be helpful on a personal level, as a habit of mind infused with an active desire to consider more than one side and give full attention to other possibilities (Dewey, 1933). This has the potential to empower the teacher as an agent of change both inside and outside of the classroom. While, “reflection can help individuals become better teachers. It can help individual teachers break out of unthoughtful habits that are not in their students' best interests. But it can also serve the broader goal of improving schools, human relations, and educational policy” (Valli, 1997, p. 86).

According to Bengtsson (1995)

The most far-reaching idea of a completely autonomous teacher who, with the help of reflection, is able to see through all political, social, historical and

other ideological factors embedded in every educational situation and from this elevated position chooses to freely and consciously to take full responsibility for his or her actions. (p. 25)

While complete detachment from the effects of socialization is impossible, the process of reflection and attention to metacognition, may help pre-service teachers begin to create habits of mind that assist them in focusing on specific areas in which they need to grow professionally. “The goal is to use metacognitive thinking as a reflective process to build new strategies that will become more automatic in the future” (James & Maher, 2004, p. 122).

It is unlikely that future teachers will promote students’ critical thinking unless future teachers themselves become critical thinkers. It is equally unlikely that teacher education students will become skilled critical thinkers if critical thinking practices are not emphasized in their teacher education. (Williams, 2005, p. 164)

This critical approach must focus on an investigation of power and privilege through exploring the political, social, historical and ideological influences that undergird our educational systems. A “critical” theory has the specific purpose of “human emancipation through social inquiry” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2005, ¶2). The purpose of the inquiry process is “to help us recognize how unjust dominant ideologies [are] uncritically accepted [and] imbedded in everyday situations and practices” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 87). Cultural forms, language and social habits are manifested ideologies. These cultural forms are then legitimized by those in power, specifically through educational practices and political structures. Thus, the critique is

focused on revealing the inequities and oppression beneath the surface of everyday activities (Brookfield, 1995).

It is of value to critically examine an educational system and pre-service teacher education within that system, a system that currently relegates certain populations to the margins, specifically, Black/African American students.

To prepare teachers to be successful with African American students, teacher educators must help prospective teachers recognize the ways that race and racism structure the everyday experiences of all Americans. More specifically, teachers must understand how race and racism negatively impact African American students and their ability to successfully negotiate schools and classrooms.

(Ladson-Billings, 2000b, p. 211)

Critical Race Theory assists and guides in exploring teacher education and how it might impact Black/African American students in an adverse manner, thereby limiting “success” as it is defined by current educational standards.

Critical Race Theory

The origins of Critical Race Theory (CRT) can be traced to legal scholarship. The focus is the study of the relationship between race, racism, and power. Additionally, CRT has a particular interest in the relationship between racism and economic oppression which occurs at the hands of legal power structures. It is a social activist movement attempting to understand and transform a social landscape that “organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 3). Its intellectual heritage is interwoven with threads from history, sociology, economic oppression, and politics. It is

a fabric tightly bound by the common strands of power and privilege as they relate to the social construct of race.

CRT is a “product and response” to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s that “sought justice, liberation and economic empowerment” with “both academic and social activist goals (Tate, 1995, p. 197). Law scholars were troubled over the “slow pace of racial reform in the United States” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi). They, along with others had observed how the progress of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s had stagnated; in fact “much progress had begun to roll back” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 4). Older avenues that addressed racism were “yielding smaller and smaller returns” in the search for racial justice. New approaches were needed to address “the more subtle, but as deeply entrenched, varieties of racism that characterize our times” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi).

Through the analysis of legal doctrine and the critique of policies created in response to the strong arm of jurisprudence, CRT scholars have come to recognize the essence of racism imbedded within our culture and that permeates the legal system. One of the major tenets of CRT asserts that racism is “normal” and so deeply imbedded in the fabric of our society that it looks “ordinary and normal to persons in the culture” (Delgado, & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi). Because of this, interventions designed to address equal opportunity, such as rules and laws, can only remedy the more extreme forms of injustice and can do very little to confront the “business as usual” forms of racism.

CRT is a strategy that assists in “unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations” (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 213). Furthermore, the CRT lens assists in understanding how a “regime of white supremacy and its subordination of people of color

have been created and maintained power in America” (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xiii).

CRT is also an activist movement that serves to change “the bond that exists between law and racial power (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 54).

CRT in education confronts racism as a hegemonic system of oppression and exploitation by exploring the processes and products of racism in our society with particular attention to how these issues are manifested in schools. “Critical race scholars in education are concerned with how schools act as racial stratifiers” (Lynn & Parker, 2006, p. 280) and believe that this “proactive framework can be used in the ongoing battle to provide equal educational access and opportunity to historically underrepresented students” (Yosso et al., 2004, p. 18).

Racism is “Normal”

The central tenet of CRT, in its declaration that racism is “normal, not aberrant, in American society” (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv), cannot be underscored enough. ‘Race is not only [based on] skin color. ... Race is a social construct ... and Whites dominate’ (Mahoney, 1997b, p. 305). Lopez (2000) also describes race as a social construct. He defines race

race as a vast group of people loosely bound together by historically contingent, socially significant elements of their morphology and/or ancestry. . . subject to the macro forces of social and political struggle and the micro effects of daily decisions. (p. 165)

This social construction is a continuous process and plays out in a plethora of ways in society and throughout the educational system.

CRT positions race as a variable in social relations that privilege Whites.

According to Sleeter (1994), White racism is “the system of rules, procedures, and tacit beliefs that result in Whites collectively maintaining control over the wealth and power of the nation and the world” (p. 6). Wellman expands the definition to include “culturally sanctioned beliefs, regardless of the intentions involved, defend the advantages that Whites have because of the subordinated position of racial minorities” (Wellman, 1977, p. 42). It is important to recognize that deliberate intention is not necessary in order for an act, idea or value to be deemed racist.

Racism is more than individual overt or covert acts. Those are merely the social manifestations. It dwells, thrives and reproduces itself at the institutional, societal, civilizational and epistemological levels as well (Scheurich & Young, 1997). Using CRT as an analytical framework allows the identification of the social manifestations of racism that permeate the social fabric in the United States. These manifestations are embedded within the culture of teacher education and the education of Black/African Americans.

Racism at the societal level is where normative constructs are created. At this level, cultural assumptions, habits and expectations favor one race over another. An example of how this plays out in the field of education is when “call and response” interaction between students and teachers is interpreted as disruptive, as opposed to acceptable communicative interaction. It opposes the concept of students working in groups. It promotes individuals working in isolation to complete tasks. This is thought to be the normative standard. Teachers who are not trained with culturally relevant approaches often perpetuate this pattern of behavior in their classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 1994). These practices have a negative effect on students who deviate from the norm.

Societal racism is then established at the institutional level. It is at this level where standard operating procedures that also favor one race over another are developed, resulting in the same biasing effect. The system crafts rules and takes punitive measures against students who are identified as disruptive. This results in an over-representation of Black/African American students at the receiving end of disciplinary measures and suspensions. An additional outcome is the broad brush stroking that occurs in the assignment of the label “at risk”. Consequently, an entire industry is developed to meet the needs of this population based on the misidentification of their “cultural disadvantage” (Hollins, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Whether intentional or not, these biases privilege one group over another on a structural level.

Racism at the civilization level is the broadest level. At this level, the assumptions are so imbedded in a culture, that its people are not conscious of them. Racism is so completely normalized that the people, see it as the “natural” order of things. This “natural order” then becomes normalized by the dominant culture at an epistemological level, as the only way of knowing. It is then legitimized and becomes the “truth”, resulting in the marginalization of one group, while privileging another. Scheurich & Young’s (1997) delineation of how racism operates at various levels of a culture assists in understanding how CRT theorists can make the claim that racism is a normal fixture in American society.

Soloranzo (1997) further corroborates the extraordinary depths in which racism is imbedded in America, specifically as it relates to teacher education. Using a Critical Race Theory framework, he describes a web of four dimensions that can be used to guide us in illuminating how racist ideologies are manifested in teacher education. He asserts that

racism a) has macro and micro components; b) it takes on forms at both the individual and institutional levels; c) occurs at both the conscious and unconscious levels; d) has a cumulative influence on both the individual and group. The “truths” about race that thrive in all four dimensions at the institutional, societal, civilizational and epistemological levels are foundational for the construction of the “majoritarian story,” also referred to as the “master narrative”.

The Master Narrative

The master narrative is the description of events told by members of the dominant culture, accompanied by the values and beliefs that justify the actions taken by those in power in order to maintain their dominant positions (Love, 2003) These stories craft the narratives that create “knowledge” that is deemed legitimate. The master narrative [knowledge base] is so engrained in society, it is often invisible and goes unexamined (Delgado, 2000).

This knowledge is comprised of “bundle[s] of presuppositions, perceived wisdoms, and shared cultural understandings” that people from the dominant race “bring to the discussion of race” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, p. 462). This “system of knowing” is the cornerstone of the master narrative (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 257). Told over time, then passed from generation to generation and shared within the dominant culture, this narrative is responsible for generating the legacy of racial privilege, specifically white racial privilege (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2002).

CRT challenges the master narrative by deconstructing it block-by-block, in addition to exploring how the blocks work together to maintain its construction. This is accomplished through an inter-disciplinary approach to the analysis of race and racism by

drawing on historical and contemporary literature from a wide array of areas such as law, history, psychology, sociology and anthropology.

The Building Blocks of the Master Narrative

The ideologies within the master narrative have helped create, support, and legitimate America's current approach to education. The master narrative implies that the education system is objective, meritocratic, color-blind, race neutral, and affords everyone an equal opportunity (Calmore, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Soloronzo, 1997). According to CRT, these implications in the master narrative are simply not true. Denying the existence of the master narrative results in a hegemonic system of oppression that does not provide space for alternative views, voices and remedies. These ideologies manifest themselves in policies and practices that are used to prepare teachers. Critical Race Theory challenges the dominant ideology and mindsets responsible for transmitting the master narrative.

Tools to Disrupt the Master Narrative

In order to disrupt the transmission of the master narrative, alternative interpretations must be employed. CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of Black/African American people is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, practicing, teaching, and learning about racial subordination. CRT sees strength in this knowledge and explicitly draws on their lived experiences through storytelling, family history, biographies, scenarios, parables, chronicles, and other narrative expressions that illuminate the perspectives of subordinated people (Bell, 1987; Calmore; 1995, 2000; Lawrence, 1995b; Delgado, 1995, 2000; Olivas, 2000). Throughout the following sections, alternative "voices" will challenge the dominant

culture, specifically its approach to education. The abovementioned tools will be employed to confront and deconstruct the master narrative.

The importance and value of the individual and collective voices of minorities cannot be understated. CRT recognizes those voices as legitimate source of knowledge that serves several purposes. CRT challenges the master narrative, gives voice to the silenced, creates community among group members, and has the potential to liberate both those who suffer oppression and those whose oppressive acts go unacknowledged and unchallenged (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Delgado, 2000; Delgado, 1995; Montoya, 2000; Olivas, 2000; Soloranzo, 1997; Tate, 1997; Yosso, 2005). These collective voices have been ignored, silenced and marginalized throughout history, and deserve a place in the center, particularly when it come to a discussion about race.

While some assert that CRT should be exclusively employed by Black/African Americans, others invite “Fellow Travelers who are trying to develop a pedagogy, curriculum, and research agenda that accounts for the role of race and racism in U.S. education and works toward the elimination of racism as a part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination in education” (Soloranzo, 1997, p. 7).

Ladson-Billings’ (1995) review of the literature on teaching African American students, resulted in the discovery that, with very few exceptions, the literature does not expressly address the preparation of teachers to teach this population of learners effectively (Ladson-Billings, 1994b). The history of education and the preparation of teachers has historically silenced the voice of African Americans. According to Tate and Ladson-Billings (1995), both Woodson (1903) and Du Bois (1933) challenged the traditional paradigm on how best to teach Black/African American students. Furthermore,

their discussion informed the field of education about the dysfunction and racism in American education. Additionally, Ladson-Billings (2005), points out a piece of history regarding the lack of merit given to two African American scholars in the development of critical theory. African American scholars such as DuBois and Woodson were every bit as critical as the Frankfurt school of philosophers; however, they were not included in the discourse or the mainstream literature.

The marginalization of the “voices of experiences” results in a schism that is evident today. For example, in search of materials for this literature review, many items had to be acquired through interlibrary loan, as they were not available at Midwestern University. One must seek out alternative sources of information on teacher education.

CRT theorists posit that any “story” that claims to include or refer to the lives of subordinated peoples is incomplete until it takes into account and includes the voices of those people who have lived the experience of subordination (Delgado, 1988; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

Irvine (2003), points to the limitations of a knowledge base when the voices of Black/African American teachers are not included in the mix.

African American teachers seldom reference or validate researchers’ perspectives that attempt to explain African American students’ low achievement. Instead, teachers look introspectively at how their racial identity, their classroom practices, and their beliefs are related to the achievement of their African American students – a complex examination, indeed. (p. 28)

“Without authentic voices of people of color (teachers, parents, administrators, students, and community members) it is doubtful that we can know anything meaningful

about education in their communities” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 58). McDermott & Rothenburg (2000) conducted focus groups in order to identify the characteristics of exemplary teachers in two urban school districts. The researchers included the voices of both the students and their family members. They found that exemplary teachers were defined as those who constructed respectful and trusting relationships with students and their families (McDermott & Rothenburg, 2000). Positive relationships between teachers, students, and the students’ families are paramount to creating a climate of receptivity in the school environment. In the course of the discussions, it was also revealed that the parents felt “unwelcome” at the school because teachers would “speak down to them” and “brush them off”. The parents voiced their opinions regarding the teaching methods that were employed in the classrooms, and suggested that when teachers “baby” a child, it makes the child feel inferior.

The research also revealed a disconnect in perception between parents and teachers. Parents stated they deliberately did not attend school events due to racism. The teachers did not seem to recognize that a racist climate at the school might deter parents. They perceived the lack of participation was due to either lack of interest, lack of transportation, or that the parents were “always working.” This is an example of how teachers blame parents rather than considering the possibility that they themselves might be contributing to the phenomenon. The findings from this study illustrate how vital it is for groups to project their voices to deconstruct and reconstruct social reality in order to gain strength in community in their shared experiences, and assist listeners in recognizing and overcoming ethnocentrism and a dysconscious worldview (Delgado, 2000).

Deconstructing the master narrative through creating counter stories provided by the voices of marginalized groups is one method to confront the dominant ideologies that pervade education and drive educational policies based on deficit model perspectives (Yosso, et al, 2004). According to Delgado, (1989), counter storytelling is a methodological tool that allows one to tell the story of the experiences that are not usually told. Additionally, this approach can be used to challenge and analyze the stories told by those in power. It is a particularly effective method in the deconstruction of the “master narrative,” while also providing alternative views that highlight the experiences of Black/African Americans.

Tools to Deconstruct the Master Narrative Challenged

According to Sleeter and Delgado Bernal (2003), most critics who challenge the use of the narrative and alternative views in CRT don't recognize that Eurocentrism has become the dominant mind-set that directly impacts mainstream stories about race, particularly in the field of education. “Because Eurocentrism and White privilege appear to be the norm, many people continue to believe that education in the United States is a meritocratic, unbiased, [neutral, objective] and fair process” (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003, p. 249). Delgado (1993) challenges society's denial of this normative perspective concerning the use of storytelling as a legitimate vehicle for sharing alternative views. He states that “majoritarians tell stories, too. But the ones they tell – about merit, causation, blame, responsibility, and social justice – do not seem to them like stories at all, but the truth” (p. 66). The stories become the master narrative, resulting in the propagation of “truths” that create, embrace and substantiate deficit-thinking models about African American students. Deficit-thinking models are products of the “myth of meritocracy.”

The Myth of Meritocracy

One of the sticks in the bundle of cultural presuppositions in the master narrative is the “myth of meritocracy”. Love (2003) states that the myth of meritocracy is the primary tool of the master narrative. Meritocracy in education is based on individualism. It is constructed on two fundamental beliefs. First, meritocracy presupposes that the educational system is fair and students “get what they deserve based solely on their individual efforts” (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002, p. 171). Secondly, meritocracy implies that if “certain people did not get more, proves that they did not deserve more” (Love, 2003, p. 231). Pre-service teachers are implicitly taught to embrace the myth of meritocracy by virtue of their experiences as students within the public schools in this country. Subsequently, they enter teacher education programs that further cement this myth by reinforcing the notions constructed within the master narrative.

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), the myth of meritocracy is instrumental in the master narrative. They explain how the embrace of a meritocratic paradigm has resulted in a system that divides students along racial lines. For example, the standardized test is based on the dominant culture’s perception of what counts and is valued as knowledge without making that knowledge accessible to all of the students who are subjected to taking the required test. This mandated test results in exclusion by virtue of its construction, resulting in the further marginalization of students.

Since the 19th century, standardized tests have been used to exclude people of color from education, owning property, and voting. “For the critical race theorist, intelligence testing has been a mechanism to legitimate African American student deficiency under the guise of scientific rationalization” (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 63).

The result is the legitimization of stereotypes that emerged from this ‘science’ “perpetuating a mythology about both Blacks and Whites” (Crenshaw, 1995, p. 112) and reinforcing the ideologies of the dominant culture.

Neutral and Color-blind

The master narrative implies that schools are neutral and objective, yet, “implicitly make assumptions according to negative stereotypes about people of color (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2002, p. 29). Love (2003) shares insights to how the master narrative employs the myth of meritocracy to perpetuate the continued achievement gap between white and Black students. Schools declare that they are race neutral and designed to afford all of its students an equal and fair shot at a decent education. Yet, some of the statistics reflect quite a different reality. While claiming neutrality, it is hard to understand why there is a disproportionate number of White students placed in honors courses, in comparison to Black/African American students. Additionally, there is a disproportionate number of Black/African American students placed in special education. While Black/African American students comprise seventeen percent of the student population, but constitute almost forty percent of the students placed in special education (Kunjufu, 2003). Other disparities include statistics that reveal that Black/African American are likely to be suspended or expelled at twice the rate of White students (Love, 2003).

In race “neutral” schools, teachers claim that they don’t see color. They claim that they are color-blind and treat all students in the same manner. Sleeter (1993) contends that teachers who claim that they don’t see color are simply in denial. It is a way to imply that race does not matter. Gotanda (2000) challenges the notion of color-blindness and

points out because “. . . race carries a complex social meaning. Preexisting race consciousness makes it impossible for an individual to be truly nonconscious of race” (p. 36). He further states that the United States has never been a “color-blind” society by walking us through history and pointing out how the law has supported the development and maintenance of racial categories that have subordinated Black/African Americans. Since racialized categories are built by the law, a logical outgrowth would extend those categorizations into the field of education.

Denying the influence of race in categorizing students results in silencing discussions that could further inform the field in regard to the “achievement gap” between White and Black/African American students. Since White pre-service teachers will eventually work within an educational system that stratifies students based on race, they must be provided the opportunity to explore alternative views about the “achievement gap” that shine the light on the system rather than the students. They must be taught that the system is not race neutral.

Rousseau and Tate’s (2003) study of high school teachers did not acknowledge race-related patterns in achievement or recognize the potential role of racism in the underachievement of Black/African American students. From these findings, the authors argue the teachers’ neutral and color-blind stance prevented them from reflecting on and examining their own practices and their role in the production of the underachievement of their Black/African American students.

According to Love (2003), “The stance of colorblindness is a way to insist that race does not matter and to dispute and deny the experience of African Americans, while preserving the privilege of white people to be surprised when race is mentioned” (p. 230).

Assertions suggesting neutrality and color-blindness in the field of education appear to be forms of denial. Crenshaw (1995) explains how Whites respond when they are confronted with race and suggests that their reactions indicate racial awareness. She explains that when Whites are confronted with the issue of race, they claim that the Black/African American person “pulled the race card”, as though (1) the people in the situation are raceless, (2) race has no history on impacting relationships, (3) decision making on the basis of race does not occur, and (4) if race were not named, it would have no effect on the immediate circumstances and outcomes (Crenshaw, 1999, p. 12).

The myth of meritocracy is also based on the premise that every student has equal access to educational opportunity, and, therefore an equal opportunity to meet the required performance standards. Yosso (2002) claims that this presumption ignores the “academic apartheid or apartheid of knowledge” (Yosso, 2002, p. 97), as well as the lack of a “culturally relevant pedagogy” (Ladson-Billings 1992, p. 95) for Black/African American students. This “contained audience” is not provided as rigorous a curriculum as that offered at White suburban schools. Black/African American students’ “dismal” performance “reflects their lack of engagement” with superior curricula, which results in students being labeled as “disadvantaged, rather than the system being labeled as faulty for its failure to provide a rigorous curriculum for the students” (Love, 2003, p. 231).

Assigning this label to Black/African American students often results in placing them in “appropriate educational tracks” purportedly designed to help them. This systemic policy propels minority students into less rigorous programs at the onset of their educational experiences. Considerable research demonstrates that students do not profit from enrollment in low-track classes; do not learn as much; and have less access to

knowledge, engaging learning experiences (Persell, 2004). Furthermore, the result of placing ethnic minority students in tracks results in creating a cycle of restricted opportunities resulting in lower achievement outcomes. Teachers have the power to make decisions about which students are placed in lower curriculum. Pre-service teacher must be made aware of the detrimental effects of tracking and the inherent inequality of tracking as an overall systemic policy.

When the master narrative tells the world that schools are neutral, objective and void of bias, it results in an ideology that implies that there is a level playing field and that all people are afforded equal access to the opportunities and resources to be successful. The flaw with this type of thinking is that equal access and opportunity is not afforded to everyone. To begin with, it is important to examine the educational system at the institutional level, specifically, the funding stream.

At the macro level, funding decisions about how much money a school receives for its operation are made by the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Congress and the individual states' Department of Educations. "CRT argues that inequality in school funding is a function of institutional and structural racism" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 62). Black/African Americans suffer the consequences of systemic racism because they are in a cycle that thwarts educational advancement. In Kozal's *Savage Inequalities* (1991) the author shares story after story describing the dismal conditions of schools attended by Black/African Americans. He further shares information about the disproportionate funding between schools which are generally based on property taxes. Poorer districts have much smaller budgets. "CRT takes to task school reformers who fail to recognize that property is a powerful determinant of academic advantage" (Ladson-

Billings, 2004, p. 63). As a consequence, the master narrative assumes that poor Black/African American students in urban centers are destined for failure due simply to economic circumstances.

While it is certain that poorly funded schools do not provide fertile ground for the development of quality educational opportunities, a study by Diamond (2006) details the “structural, institutional, and symbolic inequalities that. . . contribute to educational inequality” by pointing out that, even in integrated suburban schools, Blacks and Whites move through a racialized education system that provides “cumulative advantages for Whites and disadvantages for Blacks” (Diamond, 2006, p. 495). Simply put, a larger systemic problem is at work. “Some teachers, politicians and educational leaders, wishing to avoid or minimize the issues of race, would prefer to attribute the achievement gap to socioeconomic differences alone; while it is true that poverty is highly correlated with school failure, it has been repeatedly demonstrated that race functions independently of economics” (Banks, 2006, p. 2).

A contrasting perspective is discussed by Hodgkinson (2002). In a brief overview of U.S. demographics and teacher education Hodgkinson (2002) states, “Race is no longer a universally handicapping condition, but poverty is” (p. 103). This statement is based upon the comparison of absolute numbers between White and minority students living below the poverty level and their respective achievement levels. It does not address the data in terms of percentages, achievement rates, tracking practices, and limited access to resources for ethnic minority populations. Ignoring the systemic disparities fuels further lack of intervention. If educators do not have a grasp on the realities of disproportionate access to adequate education based on ethnicity, how can change occur?

How can teachers, administrators and policy makers address problems that they do not acknowledge exist? Simple consciousness of the existence of the problem is necessary in order to confront and work toward taking action to change and improve the situation.

According to Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001,

Whereas equality looks at the individual and the circumstances surrounding him or her, it does not focus on group differences. . . Equity deals with the difference and takes into consideration the fact that this society has many groups who have not always been given equal treatment and/or have not had a level playing field on which to play. (p. 76)

The myth of meritocracy presupposes that the methods of assessment and evaluation of student performance are fair, objective and race neutral. Standardized tests are used throughout a student's educational journey, beginning with the ISTEP at the elementary level on through the SAT and ACT, when students are considering applying for college. The majoritarian story asserts that these tests are objective and crafted to measure the abilities of all students in a fair manner. "Majoritarian claims of objectivity mute discussion about potential test bias that privilege white students over African American students" (Love, 2003, p. 231). Failure to challenge this myth results in legitimization of this type of testing as the normative standard of ability and intelligence. According to Love (2003), the sheer quantity of data demonstrating the superior performance of White children over the performance of Black/African American students reaffirms the "intellectual superiority inferiority" myth (p. 231). White pre-service teachers have participated in this type of testing regime throughout the formation of their education. They should be made aware that these types of tests are not accurate in

determining the abilities or potentialities of their future students. White students doing well on tests is not, in it of itself, an indicator of equitable testing. Just because members of the dominant culture have been successful in achieving on standardized tests, does not mean the tests are fair.

The failure to recognize that the educational playing field is not equal in its treatment toward Black/African American students, creates the illusion that it is fair, which perpetuates the myth of meritocracy. The controversy between over whether or not it is fair is partially caused by conflicting “truths” transmitted and distributed by the research community.

The research community is complicit in the construction of the master narrative that constructs the knowledge on which teacher education is based. King (1995) shares this view in her review and critique of Black Studies educational literature. She maintains that while, “a bias in knowledge production may be acknowledged, it can be also argued that the existing organization of knowledge sustains and legitimates the social framework through cultural hegemony and ideology in education” (p. 269). This occurs through not only bias and omission, but also through “selective inclusion” (King, 1995, p. 274). Educational research is a powerful tool and can be used to perpetuate the myth that the educational playing field is fair. Conversely, it has the potential of debunking the myth. Because CRT is a strategy that explores and exposes racism at a systemic level, it is important to investigate how educational research, as part of that system, generates knowledge.

A critical race methodology in education challenges White privilege, rejects notions of “neutral” research or “objective” researchers, and exposes deficit-informed

research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of color (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Furthermore, educational research can be employed to expose the myth of meritocracy through the disruption of claims of "objectivity" and "neutrality that camouflage the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. Society" (Yosso et al., 2004, p. 3).

The following example illustrates how variations in perspectives within the research community can result in conflicted approaches in the address of the needs of both White pre-service teachers and minority students. Based on "achievement gap" research data, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) posits that "possible explanations for. . . differences in achievement growth include differences in the school or home environments of children of different racial backgrounds that make it more difficult for Blacks to acquire math or reading skills at the same pace as Whites" (p. 5). These policy makers infer that the deficit lies with the students and their families. An outgrowth of this results in deficit model approaches to educating Black/African American students. Furthermore, it results in the DOE's failure to scrutinize itself as a system that might be complicit in the perpetuating the achievement gap.

A contrasting perspective from three studies reveal how White pre-service teacher recognize their lack of preparation to adequately address the needs of all students. Cruz-Janzen & Taylor (2004) conducted a study which explored White pre-service teachers' ways of understanding and valuing multiculturalism. Their findings revealed that most students indicated a lack of awareness about diverse student populations. These White pre-service professionals requested more field experiences combined with multicultural education courses in order to learn about diverse student populations.

Brown's (2004) study revealed that sixty-six percent of the pre-service teachers reported thorough coverage of diversity related knowledge, but, only forty-seven percent had engaged in cultural field experiences available to them during the duration of their education. Additional findings from the NCES (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000) revealed that most teachers indicated feeling unprepared to implement new strategies and teach students from diverse backgrounds.

While these three studies indicate that the collective voices of pre-service and in-service teachers indicate the need for expanded opportunities to learn about working with diverse populations, the arm of the federal government that sets policy seems determined to blame schools and home environments, thereby shifting responsibility to students and their environmental situations.

The disparities between the root problems described by the NCES and DOE is an important issue to explore because it points to a power differential. Is the achievement gap a Black/African American problem or a teacher preparation problem? The power to "name" and define the problem of the achievement gap between Whites and Black/African American depends on who makes the interpretation and how the interpretation is presented.

Love (2003) helps redefine the identification of the true nature of the "gap". While there may be differences between the academic achievement of Black/African American and White children when you consider national averages, this does not, in and of itself, constitute an achievement gap.

By reframing the issue we can equally well demonstrate that we have a resource gap, an expectations gap, a teacher efficacy gap, or a relationship gap, or a

commitment gap. There are varied ways that this issue can be framed. . . Since we know that the framing of the issue determines strategy development. (Love, 2004, p. 235)

By reframing and redefining gaps with an alternative lens, teacher education might be able to respond in ways that address systemic deficiencies within the educational system in addition to “gaps” in the preparation of its teachers. Yosso (2005) concurs with this sentiment and offers a suggestion that might offer teacher education an alternative perspective. She states that “CRT [should] shift the research lens away from a deficit view of Communities of Color as places full of cultural poverty disadvantages, and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged” (p. 69). This expanded definition shifts completely away from the notion of “gaps” and offers teacher education an opportunity to see strengths within Black/African American communities on which to build.

Exploring good teaching practice must also include stronger considerations of information from the marginalized communities themselves, specifically teachers of color. Delpit (1995) suggests that “too often minority teachers’ voices have been hushed” (p. 19). She further elaborates “the dilemma is not really in the debate over instructional methodology, but rather in communicating across cultures and in addressing the. . . issue of power, of whose voice gets to be heard in determining what is best for poor children and children of color” (p. 46). As Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue, “the voice of people of color is required for a complete analysis of the educational system . . . Without

authentic voices of people of color it is doubtful that we can say or know anything useful about education in their communities” (p. 58).

This issue of voice includes not only teacher practice, but also the need to re-position teacher education research that is conducted by teachers of color. It should not be marginalized. It belongs in the mainstream so that teacher education programs are more likely to infuse these bodies of knowledge in the preparation of pre-service teachers.

Since CRT recognizes that racism is a given, it presupposes that the playing field is not level. Therefore, CRT research would inquire about equity, or lack thereof, on behalf of racialized minorities, a group that has not always been given equal treatment. It would investigate the “traditional interests and cultural artifacts” currently in place that “serve as vehicles to limit and bind the educational opportunities of students of color” (Tate, 1997, p. 234). CRT in education gives us the tools to substantiate the claim that education in the United States is not played on a level playing field, but, rather tilted in favor of the white dominant culture. According to Culp (2000), “the real question is which story will be told” (p. 494).

Pre-service teachers must be informed about sociopolitical and historical foundations that have shaped the learning and educational experiences of students of color. They must be made aware of the

laws, procedures and policies that have been and currently are systemic gate keeping mechanisms that disadvantage African American student. These mechanisms are very real and create a situation in which African American learners do not begin at the same place as middle-class White students either

economically or socially. . . and because what may be valued in African American culture differs from what may be valued in schools, applying the same “remedy” may actually increase the educational disparities. (Ladson-Billings, 2000b, p. 208)

While it is important for White pre-service teachers to be aware of larger systemic issues that create the racial marginalization of Black/African American students, they must also be schooled in recognizing the rich knowledge base within the Black/African American schools and communities themselves, as this knowledge is not readily available in traditional mainstream academia. Ladson-Billings’ (1995) review of the literature on teaching African American students, resulted in the discovery that, with very few exceptions, the literature does not expressly address the preparation of teachers to teach this population of learners effectively (Ladson-Billings, 1994b). She found that most of the literature was crafted from deficit model perspectives describing students as “culturally deprived” and “culturally disadvantaged.” This generalization does not recognize African Americans as having a distinctive culture. Consequently, they are not legitimized as a people and are often perceived as “corruptions of White culture” (Ladson-Billings, 1994b, p. 206).

According to Nieto (2004), “Many educators believe that students from culturally subordinated groups have few experiential or cultural strengths that can benefit their education” (p. 407). Ogbu (1990) states that “minorities have not developed a widespread effort optimism or strong cultural ethic of hard work and perseverance in the pursuit of education” (p. 53). This type of broad brush-stroking results in stereotyping groups and viewing minorities from a cultural deficit model. It is assumed that the deficit cultural

values are transmitted through families and communities and appear to be dysfunctional which results in low educational achievement (Soloranzo, 1997). Educational communities respond with remedies and prescriptions designed to address these deficits. These include both practices and measures that reinforce stereotypes such as low educational expectations, placing students of Black/African American students in separate schools and in separate classrooms and "dumbing down" the curriculum and pedagogy (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001). These types of remedies infer that minorities are socially and culturally inferior to Whites, which results in the legacy of the continuation of stereotyping.

Soloranzo, (1997) asserts that this type of stereotyping rationalizes and justifies the manner in which minorities are treated in the educational system. As a consequence, this type of treatment places the blame on Black/African American students for unequal outcomes, as opposed to taking society and its institutions to task for their complicity in the results. Pre-service teacher must be trained with a critical eye in order to avoid being indoctrinated with this majoritarian mindset. They must be taught how to redefine normative misinterpretations about Black/African American. These interpretations must be exchanged with cultural sensitivities.

Hollins' (1990) study found that "successful" approaches to raising academic achievement for Black/African American inner-city students fell into three categories. Two of those categories responded to the needs of Black/African American students from deficit model perspectives. The first category included programs designed to remediate or accelerate without consideration of individual social or cultural needs of students. The second category of programs taught Black/African American students basic skills in

addition to attempting to re-socialize them with mainstream behaviors, values and attitudes. Teacher education's response to these programs was to focus on the academic abilities of the teachers in addition to training teachers how to re-socialize the Black/African American student (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

These types of programs infer that Black/African American students are socially and culturally inferior to Whites. Furthermore, Soloranzo, (1997) asserts that it is this type of stereotyping that rationalizes and justifies the manner in which minorities are treated in the educational system. As a consequence, this type of treatment places the blame on minority students for unequal outcomes, as opposed to taking society and its institutions to task for their complicity in the results.

The third category identified by Hollins (1990) were program models crafted to facilitate learning by recognizing, valuing and building upon students' own social and cultural backgrounds. In order to prepare pre-service teachers for this approach, teacher education must respond by training the incumbents to recognize cultural differences as cultural strengths. In order to accomplish this, the academy must embrace the notion of growing culturally competent teachers trained to provide culturally relevant methods and strategies in their classrooms. Hollins' (1990) review of successful models in how to raise the achievement levels of Blacks and African American students are parallel to the various curricular constructs within the field of multicultural education, which will be described below. However, before venturing into the area of multicultural teacher education, it is imperative to shine the CRT spotlight on the entire concept of the need for multicultural education.

We need to ask the question, whose interests are served? The African American students who will ultimately be served? Society at large? The pre-service teachers? Teacher education programs? Or, simply, the institutions of higher education which are required by NCATE, (the governing body of teacher education) to include programming that is charged with demonstrating that they are producing teachers who have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to work “with children of all races”?

Bell’s (1980) concept of “interest convergence” states that “the interests of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites” (p. 523). Thus, “white elites will tolerate or encourage advances for blacks, only when such advances also promote white self-interest” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvii). So, before we wander into an exploration of multicultural education, it is vital that we bring with us the CRT lens. In subsequent descriptions of the various interpretations and mutations of multicultural education, it will become clear, that some are designed to meet the needs of the teachers, and others are designed with respect and sensitivity to the needs of the students via cultural sensitivity and responsiveness.

Multicultural Education

Preparing culturally responsive teachers is complex and requires elements of sensitivity. Some suggest that the field of multicultural education offers a framework to accomplish this objective. Many pre-service multicultural educators agree that novice teachers must explore their own backgrounds, perceptions, beliefs and values (Farber & Armaline, 1994; Gomez, 1996; Zeichner, 1996; Grant & Gillette, 2006). “We must assist teacher education candidates in examining the knowledge and beliefs about the world they bring to the program and support them as they struggle with new ideas and as they

are exposed to different beliefs” (Grant & Gillette, 2006, p. 294). This self-examination is important in that it is a premise on which to begin to explore and compare self with others from diverse backgrounds (Zeichner, 1996). This comparison approach, however, only begins to address what needs to happen in preparing teachers with expanded views that deviate from the dominant culture with a traditionalist approach to diversity and culture. Some suggest that the first step involves “re-socializing pre-service teachers in ways that help them view themselves within a culturally diverse society” (Zeichner, 1996, p. 152). In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to help pre-service teachers confront their attitudes, beliefs and assumptions on both the conscious and unconscious levels.

Unconscious Racism

Racism is so deeply imbedded and normalized, that it permeates society at an unconscious level (Lawrence, 1995). King (2004) coins the term “dysconsciousness” defining it as an “uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order. . . that accepts dominant White norms and privileges” (p. 73). Apple (1990) confronts and criticizes the manifestation of the dominant culture on several fronts. He argues that ideology is legitimated as knowledge in schools to support specific social norms. These social norms in turn produce students and teachers who are unable to challenge social, economic, cultural, political, and educational disparity. He discusses the concept of “ideology and cultural and economic reproduction” in school settings (Apple, 1990, p. 26). He argues that schools socialize students in order to maintain control within the dominant culture.

The concept of dysconsciousness has far-reaching effects in the field of education. At a macro-level, we must understand that the field is dominated by White Eurocentric ideologies (Apple, 2000). “We do not recognize the ways in which our cultural experience has influenced our beliefs about race or the occasions on which those beliefs affect our actions . . . producing racial discrimination fueled by unconscious motivation” (Lawrence, 1995, p. 237). This domination results in “massification” (Freire, 1974) and further manifests oppression through what Gramsci (1971) calls hegemony. Dysconsciousness at the macro-level is a powerful determinant in producing a racist educational system.

At the micro-level, King’s (2004) research shows that this dysconsciousness results in pre-service teachers’ inability to identify and criticize racist ideology and oppressive societal structures. Helping White pre-service teachers discard perceptions that arrest their abilities to see beyond their own construction of social reality is one fraught with challenges and obstacles. Merely dispatching them into experiential opportunities coupled with guidance on how to recognize power and privilege requires that they must first look in the mirror and recognize the power and privilege they have by virtue of their pigmentations.

Sleeter’s (1993, 1995) work reveals that assisting pre-service teachers in examining their complicity in racism as members of the dominant culture often brings resistance, denial and resentment. “Programs of preparation must inform the pre-service teacher about racial and cultural differences other than themselves, conjoined with opportunities for them to explore their own cultural and personal values and biases” (Obidah & Howard, 2005, p. 253). Some multicultural education programs include the

employ of Whiteness Studies. Critical White Studies assists in assisting pre-service teachers in the exploration of their own biases.

Whiteness

Whiteness Studies have emerged specifically to address the fact that being White is not race neutral, but rather, also a social construction. Whiteness is a social construct. . . “a worldview. . . [that is] supported by material practices and institutions” that assumes superiority over non-Whites and benefits from that social arrangement (Leonardi, 1993, p. 119). Furthermore, Whiteness is also characterized by the unwillingness to embrace the possibility as a personal participant in the legacy of racism by evading and/or avoiding identifying oneself with a racial group. According to Marx (2004), “Even thinking about Whiteness takes a deliberate conscious effort that most White Americans simply never attempt” (p. 32). As mentioned earlier, the education and personal autobiography is often used as a tool of self-exploration in multicultural education classrooms. Additional opportunities to explore one’s belief systems, are through class discussions in pre-service teacher education training programs. These discussions have mixed results.

McIntyre (1997) tried to assist her White pre-service teachers in a critical examination of the effects of Whiteness; however, Whiteness was so invisible to them, they were unable to grasp the concept of White privilege on an individual level, or White racism at the societal or institutional levels. She coins the term "white talk" and defines it as a coded language of avoidance that serves to keep white people from examining their individual and collective roles in the perpetuation of racism. Hytten & Warren (2003)

recognized similar results citing 12 different discourse patterns that students used to “protect and secure Whiteness’s dominant position” (p. 65).

McIntyre states that this type of discourse takes place in the university classroom after the White pre-service teachers tutor minority students. She states that “White talk” conversations include:

uncritical acceptance of biased comments through avoidance, interruption, dismissing counter-arguments, silences, and/or colluding with each other to create a ‘culture of niceness’. This results in anesthetiz[ing] the white psyche, and minimizing white culpability for the existence of individual, institutional, and societal racism. (McIntyre, 1997, p. 78)

This anesthetization process could, therefore, contribute to the perpetuation of “dysconscious” racism. It is one thing to be unconscious that racism exists that marginalizes Black/African Americans, it is quite another to confront “White racism.”

According to Marx (2004), “The ways in which Whites benefit from racism is termed “white racism” (p. 32). When Whites are called to shine the light on themselves in terms of culpability and complicity, taking personal responsibility, the dialogue hits closer to home. Suddenly, the problem doesn’t exist “out there,” it situates the White pre-service teacher in a position of opportunity to either learn about the privilege of pigmentation, deny it, or process it in a manner that deflects responsibility.

In Pennington’s (2007) study of White pre-service teachers, she noticed that in the beginning, the pre-service teachers’ stories positioned themselves “as saviors intent on helping the children” (p. 105) and subsequently evolved into martyrdom due to their

social constructions of race, specifically situating themselves as the dominant voice in this storied interpretation of events.

Overtime our counter narratives turned from sympathetic stories of how the children needed us to constructing ourselves as martyrs, as though we were sacrificing our work lives to teach them. We were feeling frustrated and underappreciated but we stayed due to our mission and at times embraced another aspect of martyrdom, the view of ourselves as victims. . . We chafed under the notion that the children and families did not see our efforts as valiant and honorable. (Pennington, 2007, p. 105)

It might have been helpful to engage with the families and communities from which these children came. Isolating themselves within the confines of their classrooms for discussions did not provide the students and/or their families an opportunity to contribute to the dialogue. Consequently, the teacher educator and the pre-service teachers missed out on the possibility of a valuable learning experience that might have provided useful information about the students.

Community-based experiences must be incorporated pragmatically. One teacher educator sent his students into the community with an assignment that involved taking a “cultural plunge” for the purpose of promoting critical consciousness, multicultural understanding and helping his students recognize the power of position. This “cultural plunge” involved exposure to social and cultural settings in which the students’ norms are clearly in the minority. These experiences lasted for between 30 minutes and two hours in various settings of the student’s choice.

The instructor stated that findings revealed that the students had confronted their fears, engaged in critical reflection, which resulted in identification and empathy with others (Houser, 2008). It was also determined that many of the students saw this as self-serving activity for personal entertainment as opposed to an educative experience. Some processed the experience in paternalistic terms, while others denied or deflected personal responsibility regarding their positions of power.

An additional caveat to this immersive “plunge” was the manner in which the instructor filtered the experience of one of the student’s experiences through his normative lens. In his interpretation of the Black/African American female’s experience of going on a date with a European-American, he stated that the student’s reflection “seemed more interested in the stir that was created than in gaining new understanding” (Houser, 2008, p. 477). First, the teacher educator dismissed this student’s knowledge as legitimate which devalues Black/African American voice. Secondly, he failed to recognize that her reflection, was indeed critical at a higher level, as she recognized that she was breaking a cultural norm at the “civilization level” (Scheurich & Young, 1997). While the author states that the objective was to assist students in the “development of critical consciousness,” it appears that they were simply voyeurs and did not discuss racism at a systemic level (Houser, 2008, p. 465). The teacher educator failed to recognize the potential of a rich discussion that could have evolved as a result of breaking such a deeply ingrained norm.

While observations and focused discussions might have the potential to disrupt Whiteness, other educators contend that discourse leads to the reification of White privilege. Hytten & Warren (2003), found that “whiteness *was* a discourse of power that

worked to maintain power imbalances” (p. 67). Through an analysis of the students’ reflective papers and class discussions in an upper level course on education and culture, the researchers found four patterns that the students used to protect white domination.

The first pattern was illustrated through reflections that primarily focused on self, in which students dwelt on their own feelings, emotions and perceptions, while also making comparisons to others by distinguishing themselves from those who were more racist. This discourse was disabling because the focus remained entirely on their positionalities. The second pattern was comprised of reflections about progress that society has made throughout history. They further defined progress based on their own self-enrichment as a form of progress, which the researchers felt prioritized self-enrichment over justice for people of color. Finally, while the students seemed to cognitively understand the literature of bell hooks (1984), Peggy McIntosh (1995), and Ladson-Billings (1995), it did not match how they expressed themselves in relation to how they experienced the world. This type of discourse reifies Whiteness because it dismisses personal responsibility and leads to complacency and resistance to the fact that racism still exists (Hyttén & Warren, 2003).

A contrasting perspective about how the legacy of Whiteness is reified in teacher education, involves the exploration of how courses and learning situations are designed and facilitated. This perspective also investigates teacher educators’ perceptions of White students. Lowenstein (2009) challenges the conceptualization of White teacher candidates as deficit learners who bring preconceived notions about Black/African American students to the learning environment. Instructors who embrace this notion are able to

envision White pre-service teachers as “active learners who bring resources to their learning” (p. 181). She suggests that

the caricature of teacher candidates as deficient is inextricably linked with our pedagogical choices as teacher educators: the assumption that our students are deficient may lead to pedagogies that impede their engagement. The power of this self-fulfilling prophecy seems to elude us. We rarely consider that it is possible that students disengage in the classroom because we use methods that assume they are disengaged. (Lowenstein, 2009, p. 180).

Lowenstein draws from Giroux (2001), Cuban (1973), and Freire (1974) in her assertion that White pedagogies employed in teacher education must be examined in order to determine how the messages and the methods within multicultural education courses might be instrumental in perpetuating the legacy of the deficit learner conceptualization of pre-service teachers, therefore, limiting the possibilities of Whites to unlearn racism.

bell hooks takes issue with Whites who, while they may be truly concerned about racism, limit their opportunities to learn (unlearn).

Often the White women who are busy. . . ‘unlearning racism’ remain patronizing and condescending when their discourse is aimed solely in the direction of a White audience and the focus solely on changing attitudes rather than addressing racism in a historical and political context. They make us the ‘object’ of their privileged discourse on race. As ‘objects’, we remain unequals, inferiors. . .

[T]hey are not yet free of the type of paternalism endemic to White supremacist ideology. (hooks, 1984, p. 13)

hooks is accurate in her assessment of the need for pre-service teachers to obtain an expanded historical understanding of the nature of racism. CRT assists in exposing how the historical and political objectification of a racialized “Other” can be connected to the notion of “Whiteness as property.”

The historical legacy of the interrelationship between race and property, has evolved to produce subordination in the present. Early in our nation’s history, “To be identified as being White” was “to have the property of being White” (Harris, 1993, p. 1721) because it afforded a person access to resources, power and privilege not available to Black/African Americans. With that privilege, comes the power to “name” and “define” social reality. “What persists is the expectation of white-controlled institutions in the continued right to determine meaning – the reified privilege of power” (Harris, 1993, p. 1762). That expectation results in the ability of White people being able “to exercise, benefit from, and create and re-create a larger structural system of collective institutional White privilege” (Vaught & Castagno, 2008, p. 96). The field of education is one of those larger structural institutions constructed by a collective of White educators responsible for preparing pre-service teachers. Thus, it is important for pre-service teachers to recognize the positionality of, not only the social institution, but, also those responsible for conveying knowledge using Whiteness studies.

While White Studies and Critical White Studies might be a useful in assisting White pre-service teachers in the unpacking of their “invisible knapsacks of privilege” (McIntosh, 1989, p. 10), it is safe to assume that Black/African Americans already recognize that they are not automatically afforded those same privileges. One way to learn about the disparities, is to actively listen to the voices of the people who are having

the experiences that relegate them to the margins. CRT's approach recognizes, listens and responds to these voices by challenging the "master narrative" of the "majoritarian" dominant culture. In teacher education, this translates into recognizing the importance of developing teachers who are culturally responsive. Multicultural courses and program within the field of teacher education are designed to do that.

Multicultural Education Approaches

The literature about multicultural education programs for teacher education is quite diverse in its approach. There are variations in approaches to research, as well as differences in programmatic designs to incorporate multicultural education within teacher education. While multicultural education serves to assist pre-service teachers in the expansion of awareness and attention to diversity, not all programs are crafted with the same purposes and intentions. It is important to further explore the various research designs as well as the program designs. The variations in purpose influence how the programs are designed which, then dictate how the pre-service teachers perceive multicultural education. How pre-service teachers view multicultural education, ultimately dictates how this knowledge base might be employed in their classrooms.

Multicultural Pre-service Teacher Preparation

These various approaches to multicultural education take shape in a variety of ways within pre-service teacher education programs themselves. Grant & Tate (2001) cluster those into the following categories: university-based workshops, courses, and programs; university field experiences with and without pre-service courses; and placement in culturally diverse classroom or community settings. Each type of "multicultural" learning experience within each of these components is unique.

Additionally, within each category, there might be conceptual variations about the overall purpose of multicultural education.

University-based workshops are short concentrated seminars that do not appear to have a long-term effect on the stereotypical thinking of White pre-service teachers (Baker, 1973; Henington, 1981; and McDiarmid & Price, 1990). Tate and Grant's (2001) review of the literature on university multicultural education courses revealed that most of the courses offered pre-service teachers insights into race and class oppression along with an opportunity to increase their awareness of how stereotyping occurs based on family background, skin color and test scores. Additionally, most courses provided historical background information about urban students. A review of the impact of those courses revealed that the "courses improved the pre-service teachers' understanding of multicultural education" (Grant & Tate, 2001, p. 150).

Some teacher education programs infuse multicultural education throughout the professional pre-service program. This approach puts multicultural education at the center. Ladson-Billings (1999) supports the use of CRT in examining multicultural education because "the power of such a perspective [and] its ability to move us out of a cycle of detailing and ranking research and programs without a systematic examination of their paradigmatic underpinnings and practical strengths" (p. 215).

An additional CRT perspective position suggested by Ladson-Billings (1999) is that the responsibility of failure is on the schools and educational systems. This reframes the nature of failure so that it is not automatically assigned to the students and presented as "student failure" or "students' inability to achieve." Ultimately, culpability lies with

education as a social institution and the manufacture of teachers trained to work within that system.

Teaching the Culturally Different

The “teaching the culturally different” multicultural program design prepares pre-service teachers to teach K-12 students to fit into the existing Eurocentric culture and social structure (Grant & Tate, 2001). This type of program trains pre-service teachers to design their curricula with attention to their [the teachers’] perceptions of their students’ learning styles and life experiences while focusing on the development of basic skills. This is an attempt to build bridges between the student’s “different” cultures in order to help them adapt to the norms of the dominant culture. This type of programming rarely raises questions about the dominant culture’s traditionalist approach to education.

From a CRT perspective, this approach is constructed on the premise that certain students are narrowly categorized as having culturally specific learning styles in addition to being deficient and inferior. Yosso (2005) critiques and challenges sociologists Bourdieu (1977) and Oliver & Shapiro (1995) who have defined cultural capital using a White dominant culture perspective. Oliver & Shapiro’s (1995) interpretation of the definition results in a deficit model explanation for the “lack of success” of Black/African Americans . This deficit informed perspective depicts Black/African American communities as places of deprivation. Yosso 2002) states

that one of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism in US schools is deficit thinking. . . [that] takes the position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because: (a) students enter school without

the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child's education.

Educating teachers in how to help their students develop basic skills implies that the students are not capable of more sophisticated levels of thinking. While employing this "banking method" (Freire, 2000), it also denies student identity and attempts to homogenize students and assimilate them into the dominant culture.

Human Relations

The "human relations" approach to multicultural education is designed to train pre-service teachers to help their future students build self-esteem and "increase school and social harmony". This type of multicultural curricula in teacher education trains the teacher candidates in how to craft lessons and activities that "eliminate. . . stereotyping and. . . promote individual differences and similarities" by "celebrating cultural holidays and highlighting" important works of "authors of color" (Grant & Tate, 2001, p. 147). Nieto (2000) supports an expanded vision of [multicultural education for] social justice by suggesting

[that] social justice and diversity are not the same thing. A concern for social justice means looking critically at why and how our schools are unjust for some students. It means analyzing school policies and practices—the curriculum, textbooks and materials, instructional strategies, tracking, recruitment and hiring of staff, and parent involvement strategies—that devalue the identities of some students while overvaluing others. (p. 183)

From a CRT perspective, while this approach attempts to promote harmony and honor diversity among students, it does not include critical exploration of systemic racism, conflict between groups, and institutionalized marginalization of specific groups.

Single Group

This approach to multicultural education focuses on a specific group with the assumption that “knowledge about [the] specific group should be taught separately” from a regular classroom or course, in order to prepare teachers to teach K-12 students about the “culture and contributions of that group, as well as. . . how it has been oppressed” (Grant & Tate, 2001, p. 147). It also positions multicultural education at the margin, often as a separate, program entirely.

From a CRT perspective, this approach isolates specific marginalized groups and takes the potential of important discussions about race and racism out of the mainstream. McDonald (2005) adds that multicultural and diversity issues should be addressed throughout the pre-service education process as opposed to isolated components. Isolating multicultural education in only certain courses marginalizes the concept and implies that it deserves a place in the margins of teacher preparation. How multicultural education is positioned within the context and content of teacher education conveys a message of its importance. Zeichner et al, (1998) states that teacher education itself must function “as a living example of multicultural education. . . The entire climate and culture should radiate a consistent. . . and comprehensive appreciation for and promotion of cultural diversity,” (p. 164) as this sends an unequivocal message that attention to diversity is important.

Multicultural Education

In the multicultural education genre, the curriculum is based on the need to illuminate “social structural inequalities and cultural pluralism” by highlighting the perspectives of various cultural groups by exploring how inequities play out in society (Grant & Tate, 2001, p. 147). Pre-service teachers are educated to understand how these inequities are transmitted in their own teaching practices in addition to learning how students from different cultures are socialized. They are, then, prepared to actively involve students in thinking and analyzing by building on individual student learning styles and adapting their instruction to students’ skill levels. From a CRT perspective, this approach grapples with the issues of systemic racism including how pre-service teachers might be complicit in its transmission, but does not train teachers to be social activists in order to disrupt racism on a larger societal level.

Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist Education

By expanding the single group and multicultural education approaches, this framework is designed to train teachers how to instruct their students to critically analyze oppression and inequality, with particular attention to the students’ individual life experiences (Grant & Tate, 2001). Furthermore, it extends the purpose of multicultural education to include instruction designed to prepare teachers and their future students on how to become actively involved in working toward equality (Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Sleeter, 1995; Banks, 2004, 2006).

“Multicultural teaching is not simply a list of teaching strategies. . . it is an orientation to listening to oppressed people. . . with the aim of learning. . . building dialogue. . . and sharing decision making with the oppressed community” (Sleeter, 1995,

p. 432-433). One way to learn about the disparities, is to actively listen to the voices of the people who are having the experiences that relegate them to the margins. CRT recognizes, listens and responds to these voices by challenging the “master narrative” of the “majoritarian” dominant culture. In teacher education, this translates into recognizing the importance of developing teachers who are culturally responsive.

Research suggests that the most valuable multicultural education experience for pre-service teachers is the field experience (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). Isolated classroom components without field experiences do not provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to interact with diverse student populations. This lack leaves pre-service teachers with no experiences to apply the knowledge learned in academic courses. King (2004) suggests that “students need experiential opportunities” grounded in liberatory pedagogical approaches that “do not neglect the dimensions of power and privilege in society” (p. 80). These types of initiatives connect teaching and learning to social justice issues. They do not tell students what to think, but assist teachers and students in “engaging with information and experiences in tangible ways that raise critical questions about what social justice means to them and how they can work to make society better” (Wertheimer & Kahn, 2007, p. 100).

“Experiential learning, transformational learning, reflective practice and situated learning” may assist the learner to “see the influence of power relationships on their lives” and encourage resistance against oppression by looking beyond the immediate struggle and on to possible solutions (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 296 & 160). Experiences in diverse settings have the potential to assist White pre-service teachers by providing insight about people who happen to live in seemingly different

worlds. Through interaction with marginalized populations, teacher candidates might begin to move from accepting societal status quo to questioning it. Ultimately such questioning can lead to altered understandings and perhaps, subsequent, action. Thus, immersive experiences have “the potential for being the catalyst for transforming thinking” (Baldwin, Buchanan & Rudisill, 2007, p. 317).

While these types of learning experiences are certainly fraught with *opportunity* to see the influence of power relationships, it does not appear to be a “given.” Haberman & Post (1994) found out about the importance of guiding students through the process and with follow up discussions in which they were able to reflect on their learning experiences. When students are merely observers, they may understand the message, but fail to connect it in meaningful ways. Guided instructional strategies, such as journals, discussions, projects and assignments are found to increase awareness of diversity and enhance the use of practical applications.

Discussion and dialogue cannot be understated. Banks (2006) asserts that “We have placed White teachers in multicultural settings and expect them to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their own life experiences, socialization patterns, worldviews and levels of racial identity” (p. 6). In order to confront this problem “meaningful dialogue across the differences of race and culture” may be able to assist pre-service teachers in necessary personal transformation processes.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

“Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Teacher education programs must attend to the

White pre-service teachers' lack of prior knowledge about other cultures in order to effectively serve diverse populations.

Culturally responsive teacher preparation is an approach that has been employed in order to confront, challenge and change the deficit approach to working with Black/African American students. Yosso (2005) helps by illuminating the field of education with a shift in perspective that recognizes the cultural wealth within communities of marginalized groups. Yosso uses the CRT lens and refines the definition of “cultural capital” in order to reveal the inordinate strengths that have been illustrated in marginalized communities. She identifies dimensions of assets and resources within communities that may go unrecognized by the mainstream. Yosso (2005) explicitly states that cultural wealth includes “aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital. . . that draws on the knowledges of Students of Color. . . from their homes and communities into the classroom. . . [and] acknowledges strengths and resources within communities of color” (p. 69). Teacher educators and White pre-service teachers might benefit from these insights and expanded notions of cultural wealth. It might assist them in their ability to become both culturally sensitive and responsive.

Maddox and Soloranzo (2002) introduce an alternative instructional pedagogy in their work with White teacher candidates by combining a case study assignment with Friere's (1973) problem-posing method along with asset mapping in order to help students identify cultural capital in the community. The three phases of Freire's (1974) problem-posing methodology include naming the problem, analyzing the causes of the social problem, and finding solutions to the problem.

In this pedagogical approach, the pre-service teachers engaged in dialogue with community members throughout each phase. Freire (2000) implores educators to examine their relationships with learners in his statement “Our relationships with learners demand that we respect them. . . . be aware of the concrete conditions of their world. . . . Without this, we have no access to the way they think” (p. 58). Additionally, Friere (1973) advocates for dialogue with oppressed groups of people, not a simple one-time exchange to be discarded after it occurs, but an ongoing recursive reflective process illustrated in the Maddox & Soloranzo (2002) course design.

The community-based case study provided White pre-service teachers the opportunity to engage in such dialogue. The White pre-service teachers’ case studies served as

vehicles for listening to individual and family oral histories and observing community life. . . that allowed student teachers to pay attention to the contextual reality and its impact on traditional victims of social injustice while reflecting on the moral and ethical aspects of teaching and learning rather than exclusively focusing on technical competencies such as lesson planning, test construction, and assessment strategies. (p. 79)

The community case study employed an *asset mapping* approach (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993). Asset mapping is based on the premise that assets can be found with individuals in the community; in community associations and institutions; and within the local knowledge “native” to the community itself. The pre-service teachers were dispatched to conduct ethnographic studies in order to explicitly identify the strengths and resources within the communities. Through an analysis of the case studies, Maddox

& Soloranzo (2002) found this pedagogical approach served as “an explicit method of self-reflection and critical inquiry. . . [in order to help pre-service teachers understand] how race is an organizing principle of individual identity and collective consciousness” (p. 76).

Dispatching White pre-service teachers into Black/African American communities offers white pre-service teachers the privilege and opportunity to learn about the strengths of their students, their families and communities. White teaching candidates must begin to learn how to build relationships with students, parents and community members from marginalized communities. In order to be successful, they must walk in their student’s shoes, walk through their neighborhoods and observe their surroundings (Kunjufu, 2002). In building these relationships, White pre-service teachers might come to recognize the assets, strengths and unity of the students who enter their classrooms. Teacher education programs must be based on the assumption that all students bring knowledge, skills, and experiences that should be recognized and used as resources in teaching and learning (Baber, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001).

According to Ladson-Billings (2000), “No single course or set of field experiences is capable of preparing pre-service students. Rather a more systemic, comprehensive approach is needed” (p. 207). This systemic approach includes teacher education programs designed with multicultural education at the center, not as an additive piece to an existing program. This approach provides White pre-service teachers the opportunity to build critical consciousness throughout their entire teacher education programs. According to Milner (2006) the pre-service teachers who seemed the most

prepared and efficacious about teaching in urban schools and highly diverse settings had the most salient interactions and connections with the following: (a) cultural and racial awareness and insight, (b) critical reflection, and (c) the bridging of theory and practice” (p. 345). These learning experiences might be provided to White pre-service teachers in education programs designed with social justice as a centerpiece.

Summary

What White pre-service teachers learn in the formative years of their teacher education programs is an area worth exploration, particularly when they are dispatched into settings working with Black/African American students. By understanding what they learn and how they express that learning might provide teacher education with an expanded knowledge base about what is and is not happening in the field in regard to growing culturally responsive teachers to serve our nation’s increasingly diverse population.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how White pre-service teachers construct knowledge and make meaning out of their experiences while serving as tutors at an afterschool tutoring program in which 100% of the students were Black/African American. In light of poor achievement of students in urban schools and the need for a culturally competent teaching workforce, it is imperative that today's pre-service teachers become equipped with the skills and dispositions necessary to serve this growing population. In order to obtain those skills, it is necessary to understand what White pre-service teachers are learning in urban educational settings, specifically in regard to working with Black/African American students. To obtain that understanding, this study posed the following research questions:

1. What do White pre-service teachers focus on in the critical reflective process?

2. What are the White pre-service teachers' personal assumptions about teaching, learning and interacting with African American students?
3. How do White pre-service teachers express their understanding of the impact of race on the teaching and learning process?
4. What do White pre-service teachers learn in afterschool tutoring programs in urban settings in which all students are Black/African American?

In the interest of confidentiality, all names and places have been assigned pseudonyms.

Within the curricular framework of an introductory multicultural education course, White pre-service teachers were required to examine “social factors that affect teacher decision-making and student achievement in United States schools” (“Midwestern University: College of Education,” 2007). Additionally, this introductory multicultural education course was designed to “address the need for intercultural competence, culturally-informed instructional strategies, promotion of social justice and reduction of racism and sexism in order to create democratic classrooms” (“Midwestern University: College of Education,” 2007). To support this learning process, the White pre-service teachers were dispatched to an Afterschool Program as tutors for the purpose of providing “pre-service teachers the opportunity to better understand the impact of race and class on educational attainment and to appreciate the strengths and resources of inner-city residents” (“Midwestern University: College of Education,” 2007). They recorded their experiences in weekly journal entries in response to specific prompts. This chapter describes the research design and outlines the methodologies, methods and

techniques that were used to explore, describe and understand White pre-service teachers' learning experiences within the context of the course objectives of the multicultural education course.

Description of the Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach based on the lived experiences of White pre-service teachers serving as tutors in an Afterschool Program. Qualitative research “stresses the socially constructed nature of reality. . . and the situational constraints that shape inquiry [emphasizing] the value laden nature of inquiry. . . to answer questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 10). This approach was appropriate because qualitative research recognizes that learning is socially constructed through experiences, which is also consistent with the constructivist theoretical framework. Furthermore, the qualitative approach interfaced with Critical Race Theory (CRT) because CRT recognizes race as a social construct and racism as a socially constructed phenomenon. In order to grapple with issues of knowledge construction about race, the qualitative paradigm provided the epistemological basis to do so.

This qualitative approach was operationalized through the use of the following methods: narrative inquiry and Critical Incident Technique (CIT). Narrative inquiry was chosen because, according to Clandinin & Connelly (2000), “Experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively” (p. 19). CIT works in tandem with the narrative inquiry because CIT is a systematic approach to narrative inquiry. Kain (2004) states that

this systematic approach “assess[es] the perspectives of participants through narrative inquiry process” (Kain, 2004, p. 72).

The participants in this study crafted narratives in response to Critical Incident Technique prompts designed to elicit reflections and descriptions of events relative to their roles as teachers interacting with the students in an Afterschool Program. Those responses were recorded in weekly journals and are now archived data. The archived data were written narrations of pre-service teachers’ learning experiences. Archived data from the White pre-service teacher reflective journals provided the information needed to investigate the nature of their learning experiences as tutors in the Afterschool Program.

A narrative is “retrospective meaning making of past experiences” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006, p. 656) in order to “undertake the systematic study of personal experiences and meaning: how events have been constructed by active subjects” (Kram, 2004, p. 104). How White pre-service teachers communicate their learning experiences through the narrative process assists us in understanding what they are learning in their urban field experiences and how they are making meaning out of those experiences. Personal narratives can also be in journal form (Personal Narrative Group, 1989). Chase (2005) states that narratives “may be oral or written” [including the use of journals] to tell “a short topical story about a particular event and specific characters” (p. 653). It is one way of understanding ones’ actions and [including communicating] the narrator’s point of view, including why the narrative is worth telling in the first place. In addition to “describing what happened, narratives also express emotions, thoughts, and interpretation” (Chase, 2005, p. 657).

These methods were chosen because both narrative inquiry and CIT interface with constructivism and CRT. Narrative inquiry gives “voice” to the participants. “Narrators explain, entertain, inform, defend, complain, and confirm or challenge the status quo” (Chase, 2005, p. 657). Theoretically, the White pre-service teachers were in a position to express themselves and confirm or challenge the status quo within the context of a multicultural course designed to grapple with social justice, racism and inequality. The White pre-service teachers’ journal reflections prompted by the Critical Incident Technique provided the framework for a systematic approach to “assess the perspectives of many research participants” through the narrative inquiry process. (Kain, 2004, 78).

The narratives that provided the data for the study were the personal constructions of the events, thoughts and actions of the White pre-service teachers. Another reason narrative inquiry was chosen is because narrative “reveals to us how the [pre-service teachers] construct themselves as the central characters” in the narratives of their own stories (Kramp, 2004, p. 112). This is particularly important in relation to the CRT framework. The narrators (White pre-service teachers) actively create the story or response through their particular viewpoints. Narrative inquiry shares “a story from a particular point of view” situated in a particular social, cultural, or political context which assists the researcher in interpreting the story and understanding its meaning (Kramp, 2004, p. 109). It is imperative to recognize the position of power that the White pre-service teachers bring to the tutoring experience as they were members of the dominant culture. “The word *voice* draws our attention to what the narrator communicates and how he or she communicates as well as. . . the social position from which he or she speaks” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Because of the White pre-service teachers’ positions in the

dominant culture, they may view and construct their narratives from this worldview, thus “the facts” expressed in the narratives, were factual through their individual perceptions. In essence, they were making choices in determining what they felt was a “critical incident”. “The entire premise of critical incident research is a handing over to research participants the power to deem whatever they choose as “critical” (Kain, 2004, p. 81).

According to Tripp (1993),

Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incidence is an interpretation of the significance of an event.

To take something as a critical incident is a value judgment we make, and the basis of that judgment is the significance we attach to the meaning of the incident.

(p. 8)

CIT interfaced with both the constructivism and CRT theoretical frameworks. The perspectives of the White pre-service teachers as learners and constructors of their own knowledge, suggests they recognized the power of their positions as members of the dominant culture. While they might have been the ethnic minority in the Black/African American Afterschool Program, McIntosh (1989) purports that they brought with them previously conceived notions, paradigms, values and assumptions that have been constructed through their socialization, specifically, a socialization that is privileged by skin pigmentation.

The Critical Incident Technique involved asking respondents to identify events or experiences that were “critical” for some purpose. For this study, the White pre-service teachers were asked to respond to a series of prompts involving their perceptions, feelings and experiences in an urban after school program (see Appendix A). These written

narratives allowed the White pre-service teachers to reflect on their experiences and record them throughout the duration of the semester. This was a systematic approach to inquiry because it methodically identifies “what significance [pre-service teachers] place [d] on given events. . . The narration of these experiences [were] then pooled together to analyze the experiences and activities based on the commonality of the incidents” (Kain, 2004, p. 72).

CRT also recognizes the value of the narrative. While, traditionally, CRT asserts that the stories of the oppressed group be heard, the use of this methodology was also appropriate for White pre-service teachers. Based on the tenets of CRT it is understood that the voices of the White pre-service teachers were expressed from a position of power as the voice of the majoritarian and dominant culture that presupposes the “myth of meritocracy”. This myth of meritocracy has several supporting components, including notions of (1) neutrality, (2) color-blindness, (3) objective standards of performance, (4) equal opportunity to meet the standards of performance, (5) fair methods of assessment and evaluation, (6) neutral and objective reporting of performance results, and (7) the allocation of merit to those whose performance meets the standards specified (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The tenets of the CRT framework were used to guide, but not confine, the inductive process of data analysis to explore the possibility of racist underpinnings in addition to other forms of sensitivities to inequality and social justice.

While some assert that CRT should be exclusively employed by Black/African Americans, others invite “Fellow Travelers who are trying to develop a pedagogy, curriculum, and research agenda that accounts for the role of race and racism in U.S. education and works toward the elimination of racism as a part of a larger goal of

eliminating all forms of subordination in education” (Soloranzo, 1997, p. 7). Thus, CRT as theoretical framework for this study was appropriate.

White pre-service teacher journals were analyzed to understand how they constructed meaning out of the events and their perceptions of those events in their experiences as tutors in an urban Afterschool Program in which 100% of the attendees were Black/African American. The journals were a requirement of an introduction multicultural education laboratory experience.

According to the Midwestern University website, every semester, each section of the introductory multicultural education course partners with a local non-profit community organization. In this partnership, the pre-service secondary education teaching majors spend 20 hours per semester at various locations. Many of the clients [K-12 students attending the community agencies] are from lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. The purpose of these university-community partnerships is to provide “pre-service teachers the opportunity to better understand the impact of race and class on educational attainment and to appreciate the strengths and resources of inner-city residents” (“Midwestern University: College of Education,” 2007).

Context

The community program (agency) at which the White pre-service teachers were placed for this study was The Afterschool Program. This program is in partnership with the Midwestern University. The partnership was developed in 2005 between one of the multicultural education teachers at the university and the youth minister at the local Baptist Church. The Afterschool Program was housed in the lower level of the local Baptist Church and another nationally recognized community center. While the

Afterschool Program was located at two sites, for the purposes of this study, only the White pre-service teachers' experiences at one location, the local Baptist Church, was investigated.

This particular Afterschool Program design is most closely related to what Noam, Biancarosa & Dechausay (2003) might refer to as an "associated program." This type of program maintains contact with the school personnel in regard to student progress, but functions separately from the school itself. The onus of responsibility to obtain information about student progress fell to the Education Coordinator and the Youth Minister. In a "coordinated program", school personnel might be more proactively engaged in the information exchange about student academics. The school was receptive and accommodating in allowing the Afterschool Program students, staff and tutors access to the building after hours in order to conduct "locker checks" and speak to teachers who happen to be available. This partnership was also forged by the Children's Youth Minister of the local Baptist Church.

The specific location of the field experience was the local Baptist Church located in the The Crosstown Neighborhood of Midwest City. The church is one hundred years old and is the oldest African American Baptist Church in Midwest City. The Crosstown Neighborhood is also one hundred years old and has experienced many transformations throughout that time period. The following history and description of the current status of the Crosstown Neighborhood was obtained from The Crosstown Neighborhood Study (n.d).

The Crosstown Neighborhood was founded as an industrial town and later annexed into Midwest City in 1908. At that time, it was "fairly homogenous and affluent"

inhabited by primarily White people. During the 1920s, Midwest City saw a demographic change as many Black/African American families moved into the Crosstown Neighborhood. The adjacent City Park was divided and the north half was designated "colored", ("Crosstown Neighborhood Study", n.d.) while the south half was reserved for White people. The Ku Klux Klan was active in the Crosstown Neighborhood during the 1920s and had many members including city officials, police officers, and factory workers. They often met in the City Park and burned crosses at night. The group instilled much fear in the community.

The Crosstown Neighborhood had been a fairly homogenous, affluent neighborhood. However, postwar (WWII) prosperity meant that many families were able to afford homes being built in the new additions at the edges of Midwest City. White families were moving out of the neighborhood and Black/African American families were moving in. The late 1940s marked the beginning of the Crosstown Neighborhood's transition to being home to mostly working-class families.

By the 1960s, conditions within the neighborhood had deteriorated, and in the mid-1960s Midwest City had designated the Crosstown Neighborhood as a "target area" concerning health and social welfare. The 1960 census data indicated that seventy-two percent of neighborhood residents were non-White and thirty percent of the families there were living in poverty. Nearly seventeen percent of the housing units were listed as "deteriorating." The average Crosstown Neighborhood resident had completed 8th grade and had an income well below the median for Midwest City.

According to the Crosstown Neighborhood Study (n.d), the area has remained the same in the last thirty years. However, most recently, the overall population has been

steadily declining and many of the neighborhood residents are facing poverty. The racial breakdown of the Crosstown Neighborhood contrasts sharply with the Midwest City in which it is situated, which is predominately White. The neighborhood has a higher concentration of minority groups (seventy-one percent), compared to (nine percent) in the total population of Midwest City. The Crosstown Neighborhood has lower housing values than Midwest City as a whole. Females head nearly half of all households with children in the Crosstown Neighborhood (“The Crosstown Neighborhood Study”, n.d.).

According to the Crosstown Neighborhood study (n.d.), The Crosstown Neighborhood still has a strong sense of community and a very unique identity. From its beginnings as a booming industrial town to its present-day existence as a large neighborhood, the Crosstown Neighborhood has always been a distinct and defined part of Midwest City.

The local Baptist Church is located within the Crosstown Neighborhood. All of the thirteen Black/African American middle school students who attended the Afterschool Program were members of the church. The students enrolled in the program were middle school students grades 6th through 8th.

The students enrolled in the program attended North Midwest City Middle School. This school is one of two middle schools in Midwest City. It is located on the north side of Midwest City several miles from the Crosstown Neighborhood. There were 866 students enrolled at North Midwest City Middle School at the time of this study. The racial composition was seventy-four percent White, twenty-eight percent Black/African American, and five percent other. Over half (fifty-three percent) of the students enrolled at North Midwest City Middle School were eligible for the free and reduced lunch

program ("National Center for Education Statistics," 2007). This statistic indicates that this was an urban school.

The Afterschool Program's mission was to support student academic achievement and assist them in becoming lifelong learners. The children's Youth Minister founded the Afterschool Program. He is an African American male in his mid-twenties. Also, he was born in Midwest City, and with the exception of six years of attendance at a private school in Colorado, he attended Midwest City Schools and graduated from one of the Midwest City High Schools. He began preaching at the church at the age of 15, and was subsequently hired as the Children's Youth Minister. He was in his second year of service as the Children's Youth Minister at the local Baptist Church at the time the White pre-service teachers were dispatched there to serve as tutors.

During the time of this study, the program was in its second year of operation. The Children's Youth Minister conducted the orientation for the White pre-service teachers, which included a Powerpoint presentation designed to inform them about the Afterschool Program's mission and outline the expectations of the tutors. While the Children's Youth Minister was available for the orientation, he was rarely present for the full duration of the Afterschool Program. He might show up a few minutes at the beginning or end of the program, but mostly, he was not on site at all. He did, however, assist in transporting the middle school students to school approximately once a month to conduct locker checks.

There were other Baptist Church staff members on site, intermittently, during the Afterschool Program, the office administrator and one assistant minister. Both were Black/African American females. The secretary was there until 5:00 p.m., and left the

premises 30 minutes before the tutoring session ended. Both the secretary and Assistant Minister stayed in their offices throughout the duration of the Afterschool Program hours, but were available for consultation if needed. There was also an Black/African American female Graduate Assistant, from Midwestern University. Her presence was also intermittent, in that she had additional responsibilities at other tutoring locations. There was also a Black/African American female work-study student from Midwestern University. Her role was to serve as an assistant to the Education Coordinator by assisting with snacks and other day-to-day program operations. She was also a member of the church. She started attending the church after she began her position as a work-study student. She was on site each day of the Afterschool Program. There were four other White tutors on site not included in this study. They were there of their own volition, or were there completing community service hours for another course.

The daily format of the Afterschool Program began with snacks, followed by the completion of a homework tracking sheet, then homework completion and review. The remainder of the two-hour session included enrichment activities such as educational games and locker checks. The enrichment activities were designed to support both their educational and social needs. The “locker checks” were also conducted on a monthly basis. This included a visit to the school to assist the students in organizing their lockers and school materials.

The White pre-service teachers would generally arrive a few minutes before the middle school students arrived. There were between two and three tutors each day to work with the thirteen students. They would pair up based on the homework needs of the middle school students. For example, tutors who were stronger in math were paired with

students with math homework. There was no set tutor/student pairing; it was a flexible arrangement, with some shifting during the course of the session. For example, as students completed their homework assignment, tutors might engage groups of students in games or enrichment activities.

Students, as well as their parents/guardians/caregivers, committed to the objectives of the program by signing a contract outlining both student and parent/caregiver expectations. The expectations included requiring regular attendance, along with ensuring that the students came prepared with their homework assignments and supplies. The program met on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 3:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. throughout the semester.

Design of the Study

This was a qualitative study designed to understand how White pre-service teachers construct knowledge and make meaning out of their experiences while serving as tutors at an afterschool tutoring program in an urban setting in which 100% of the students are Black/African American. It was qualitative study using archived data collected (expanded explanation to follow) from White pre-service teachers' weekly narrative journal entries in which they responded to specific prompts. Specifically, the White pre-service teachers' weekly reflective journals were analyzed according to emerging themes to understand how they constructed meaning from their field experiences in an Afterschool Program. The study also revealed what White pre-service teachers focused on throughout the reflective process, their perceptions of events, students and interactions in the tutoring process.

The purpose for using the archived journal entries was to gather data to answer the following research questions:

1. What do White pre-service teachers focus on in the critical reflective process?
2. What are the White pre-service teachers' personal assumptions about teaching, learning and interacting with African American students?
3. How do White pre-service teachers express their understanding of the impact of race on the teaching and learning process?
4. What do White pre-service teachers learn in afterschool tutoring programs in urban settings in which all students are Black/African American?

Identification of Participants

The White pre-service teachers who were enrolled in the multicultural education course served as the participants. Nine White pre-service teachers participated. The nine students in this study are those who requested to tutor middle school students at the local Baptist Church. The demographic of this population was comprised of four females and five males. One female student was from Denmark for a one-year study abroad program. The following table provides a composite of the participants in this study outlining their previous experiences working with youth. The participants provided this information during the orientation prior to their dispatch to the program. There were other tutor volunteers who were on site at the Afterschool Program. They were not part of this study, as they were there of their own volition, or were there completing community service hours for another course. Those not included in this study are identified by italicizing their names.

Table 1
Participant Pre-service Teacher Composite

Name	Day	Experience	Content Area
Nigel	M	Cadet Teaching / Afterschool Math Program	Math
Angel	M	Coach, Community Centers, Tutor experience	Unknown
Kale	M	Coach, Math, Electrician experience	Math
Anne	M	Afterschool Program tutor – volunteer	Soc Work
Travis	M	Swimming Instructor	Soc Stud
Nancy	T	Summer camp counselor	English
John	T	Wrestling camp work with youth	PE
<i>Rich</i>	T	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>Linda</i>	T	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
Jane	Th	Group activities	Science
Dee	Th	Practicum experience	English
<i>Manning</i>	Th	<i>Basketball coach</i>	<i>PE</i>
<i>Max</i>	Th	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
Miss Bee	MTTh	Secondary Ed; Ed.D. student in Education	Sociology
Miss Dahlia	MTTh	Secondary Education	Math
Miss Kamille	MTTh	Work at Deaf School; tutor experience	Theater

* The italics indicate that those people were not included in the study, as they were volunteers of either their own volition or completing community service hours for another course. They were all White, except for Manning. These were the pseudonyms assigned to the participants.

Sample and Population

The sample was purposefully chosen from a population of twenty White pre-service teachers enrolled in the introductory multicultural education course. Nine specific White pre-service teachers in this study were chosen because they participated in a field experience in which they tutored Black/African American students in an urban environment at the local Baptist Church. They were required to record their learning experiences in journals on a weekly basis responding to the Critical Incident Technique prompts provided by their instructor. Their journals were archived and provided the data for this study.

Data Collection

Data was collected from the archived narrative journals submitted to the multicultural education course instructor. The data from the weekly journals were submitted to an email account set up by the university instructor. I had access to this account and reviewed it weekly for program administrative purposes, as I was the education coordinator for this tutoring site. While the instructor used this data as a teaching tool and responded to the student journals, I did not. My role was simply program facilitation. The pre-service teachers were informed of my role as supervisor and were made aware that I had access to their journal entries for program administration purposes. This occurred on the first day of class at the university.

The archived data have been stored electronically on both the email account site, my personal computer and a jump drive as a backup copy. Each of the nine pre-service teacher wrote approximately two single-spaced pages per week over the course of 10

weeks. The quantity of the data was approximately 500 double-spaced pages. The data were identifiable by the pre-service teachers' names. At the end of the semester, the students were informed that I would be contacting them for permission to use their journals as part of a research project. The students provided me with contact information so that such informed consent might be obtained (See Appendix B). Upon committee and IRB approval, I requested the written consent of each of the pre-service teachers through both emails and phone calls (see Appendices C and D). My initial contact with the participants enabled me to obtain their current mailing addresses. After this information was obtained, IRB approved consent letters were sent to each participant (see Appendix E). All nine of the nine White pre-service teachers verbally or electronically provided me with their consent to use their journals for research purposes. Subsequently, they provided their written consent by returning the informed consent form in the self-addressed stamped envelopes that were mailed to them after the initial contact. Six of the responses were immediate, three required follow up calls and a second mailing of the informed consent forms.

The White pre-service teacher narratives were comprised of their responses to a series of prompts asking them to reflect on their experiences. The specific prompts were based on Brookfield's approach to assisting teachers in the process of reflection (Brookfield, 1995, p. 75-76). According to Gay & Kirkland (2003), self-reflection is necessary in order for pre-service teachers to become culturally responsive. It is important that they know who they are as people, understand the context in which they teach and question their knowledge, assumptions and beliefs. Furthermore, "many prospective teachers do not clearly understand what constitutes self-reflection, or how to

do it. . . . they miss the analytical introspection, continuous reconstruction of knowledge, and the recurring transformation of beliefs and skills that are essential elements of self-reflection” (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 182). Self-examination is a technique to assist teachers in personal and professional development. The pre-service teachers’ weekly reflective journals provided them with the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences within the context of the local Baptist Church and examine their learning experiences throughout the course of the semester for the purpose of enhancing their learning in tandem with their multicultural education course work.

The instructor framed the critical reflection process assignment. An exact replica of the written instructions, honoring the integrity of the piece as prepared by the multicultural education instructor, is as follows:

Personal Culture Learning Through Reflection

Journal Writing: Personal culture learning can be more easily facilitated by keeping a log of your observations, thoughts, reactions, and conclusions throughout your experiences. A journal will enable you to accomplish several objectives, including:

- assisting you in developing your skills in observation, reflection, and interpretation (identified as one of THE major skills of successful teachers – Weiner, 2005)
- providing you with a record of your observations and activities, thus making it easier for you to prepare formal reports and presentations (e.g., your portfolio artifact)
- providing you a basis for discussion and further reflection, which may help you better understand the outcomes of your experiences.
- providing a written record tracking your personal growth as an educator.
- identifying patterns in things that keep cropping up (becoming more aware of your habitual practices and reactions is an important step in examining your own personal assumptions about teaching, learning and the students with whom you interact - Brookfield, 1995).

Directions: At this point you would like us to tell you HOW LONG this reflection should be.

Instead, we want you to know: You should spend approximately 20-30 minutes writing as soon as possible after a lab experience. Record any details that are remembered with particular vividness.

To “prime the pump” for you, we provided several prompts below. Please provide a brief, but THOUGHTFUL, response to each question, but you are not limited to just these topics. You should write about anything that feels significant, even if you’re not sure why and even if it doesn’t fit under any of these questions.

Remember this is a tool for your personal educational journey. As teachers in training and future educators, it is important to remember that we are never done learning, reflecting and improving our practice. This simple tool is a guide to assist in that process.

Due: Within 36 hours of your lab experience.

Send to: xxx@yahoo.com No attachments, please! Type in Word first, spell check, then cut and paste into the body of the email. Make sure your name is in the body, also.

1. What was the moment (or moments) this week when I felt most connected, engaged or affirmed as a teacher – when I said to myself, “This is what being a teacher is really all about.” Why?
2. What was the moment (or moments) this week when I felt most disconnected, disengaged, or bored as a teacher – when I said to myself, “I am just going through the motions here.” Why?
3. What was the situation that caused me the greatest anxiety or distress? Why?
4. What was the event that took me by surprise – an event where I saw or did something that shook me up, caught me off guard, gave me a jolt, or made me unexpectedly happy? Why?
5. Of everything I did this week in my teaching what would I do differently if I had the chance to do it again? Why?

6. What do I feel proudest of in my teaching activities this week? Why?
7. How will what I learned this week impact my teaching practice in the future?

Due: Within 36 hours of your lab experience.

Data Analysis

The analysis of reflective journal narratives included the process of reading, interpreting, rereading, noting patterns, categorizing and identifying recurrent themes “by lifting appropriate words and phrases from the text” (Kramp, 2004, p. 117) and “searching for regularities and patterns as well as topics” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 173). This inductive process supported the goal of data analysis which “is to uncover the common themes or plots in the data” by “noting underlying patterns across examples of stories” (Polkinghorne, 1998, p. 177).

Both “analysis of narrative” and “narrative analysis” were conducted. According to Crotty (2003), these analytical processes are not contradictory, but might be used to compliment each other. An analysis of the individual narratives led to the identification of both the individual and shared experiences that informed and shaped the construction of the White pre-service teachers’ learning experiences. For this study, it was important to do both types of analysis in order to get to the core of the research questions on both an individual level, as well as a collective in order to identify reoccurring themes and patterns.

First, the “analysis of narrative” provided a window into the individual experiences of the White pre-service teachers. It was important to explore the individual experiences, as a method to understand how the White pre-service teachers constructed

their experiences. This aligned with the theoretical framework of constructivism that centers on the learners' experiences. In this sense, constructivism is "primarily an individualistic understanding. . . that focuses exclusively on the meaning-making activity of the individual mind" (Crotty, 2003, p. 58). Analyzing the narratives on an individual basis assisted in understanding how the White pre-service teachers made sense of their individual tutoring experiences.

Secondly, it was important to employ a "narrative analysis" because it reflected the collective voices of the White pre-service teachers. "Narrative analysis". . . moves from the particular data gathered to the construction of a collective story (Polkinghorne, 1995). The characteristics of the narrative provided the foundation for synthesizing the data in order to construct an overarching collective narrative of the shared experiences of the White pre-service teachers.

Pre-service teachers are products of an education system constructed and maintained by the dominant culture. They are covered with the residue of a system that relegates ethnic minorities to the margins. Their collective voices were analyzed in order to determine if [how] they are collectively reproducing a voice that marginalizes Black/African American students. Exploring the collective voices was important in order to focus on the "collective generation of meaning as shaped by. . . social process" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127).

Crotty (2003) also recognizes the importance of the collective experience. It is through the "collective generation and transmission of meaning" that influences and "emphasizes the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see and feel things" (Crotty, 2003, p. 58). This collective transmission of meaning is called

constructionism. In essence, it is constructivism of the collective. Because human beings cannot divorce themselves from the culture in which they constructed knowledge and meaning, it was important to explore the collective narratives. Crotty (2003) describes how

Critical theory. . . is suspicious of the constructed meanings that culture bequeaths to us. It emphasizes that particular sets of meanings, because they have come into being in and out of the give-and-take of social existence, exist to serve the hegemonic interests. Each set of meanings supports particular power structures, resists moves towards greater equity, and harbours oppression, manipulation and other modes of injustice and unfreedom. (p. 60)

The specific procedures for the data analysis process were as follows (Thomas, 2003): the preparation of raw data files; several close readings of the narratives; creating the categories; coding the data and continuing the revision and refinement of the categories.

Data Preparation

Each White pre-service teacher journal was arranged into separate electronic files. Then, journals were assigned identification numbers. Next, each journal prompt was assigned a number. Then, a number was assigned to each week the White pre-service teacher submitted a journal entry. The journal prompts were arranged in both numerical order according to prompt number and chronological order according to the week in which each journal entry was made.

The result of organizing the data in this manner provided a template designed to store the data according to each prompt, each participant and each week. The numerical

codes served as a method of organizing the data for analysis. An example of the identification code is as follows: S-1-1 identified White pre-service teacher 1, responding to journal prompt 1, submitted the first week of the lab experience. This process was chosen based on the principles of constructivism in that students construct knowledge over time through cumulative experiences. Examining the data in this manner provided attention to the progression of the White pre-service teachers' learning over the course of the semester. It yielded findings that spoke to both growth and stagnation in terms of their cultural sensitivities as tutors.

Narrative Review

Next, the journals were read several times to familiarize myself with the essence of the narratives. I looked for broad themes and did not limit the review of the data to predetermined codes or categories. After several readings of the data, I sensitized my review of the data and “search[ed] for regularities and patterns as well as topics” (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 173) and considered “the multiple meanings that [were] inherent in the text” (Thomas, 2003, p. 5). Those patterns and regularities provided the basis for a categorical organization of the data.

Creating categories

Developing the categories began with highlighting the words and phrases that represented topics and patterns. The categories were crafted using specific language found within the journal prompts submitted by the White pre-service teachers. “The upper level or more general categories [were]. . . derived from the research aims. The lower level or specific categories were derived from multiple readings of the raw data (in vivo coding). For “in vivo” coding, categories [were] created from meaning units or actual phrases used in

specific text segments” (Thomas, 2003, p. 6).

The tenets of Critical Race Theory guided, but did not limit the development of the categories. Attention to references about meritocracy, color-blindness, social systems, students’ families/communities involving perceptions based on dominant culture constructs were at the forefront of my attention in constructing the categories. For example, inferences about how Black/African American students should learn, behave and respond to instruction were of particular focus. Additionally, how the White pre-service teachers interacted with, responded to, and perceived the Black/African American students, were also focal points.

An additional sensitivity to reading the data was guided by attention to levels of reflection loosely guided by Van Manen’s (1977) three levels of reflectivity: the technical rational, practical action, and critical reflection. Attention to the nature of their reflections helped in understanding how deeply pre-service teachers reflected on their experiences in their roles as tutors.

Bogdan & Biklen (2007) offer categorical guides to assist in organizing data. These include “Definition of the Situation Codes,” “Perspectives Held by Subjects,” “Subjects’ Ways of Thinking about People and Objects,” “Process Codes,” “Activity Codes,” “Event Codes,” “Strategy Codes,” “Relationship and Social Structure Codes,” “Narrative Codes,” and “Methods Codes” (pp. 174-180). These provided a loose framework for guiding the categorization and coding processes. It was within this framework that the specific focus of the research objectives were organized. Of particular use was Bogdan & Biklen’s (2007) narrative code, as it is used to describe the structure of the narrative itself. According to Bogdan & Biklen (2007), “structures [participants]

choose to organize their stories. . . reveal something about their beliefs. . . [particularly] when there are contradictions or omissions.

Coding

The nature of the coding process was organic in that it unfolded as I engaged with the data. The identification of the text segments that contained meaning relative to the research objectives provided the basis for the creation of “label[s] for [the] new categor[ies] into which the text segment [was] assigned. Additional text segments [were] added to the categor[ies] where” it was relevant (Thomas, 2003, p. 5). As I engaged with the raw data, the nature of the categories were identified. As new codes were identified, the coding frame was changed and the narratives were reread “according to the new structure” (Thomas, 2003, p. 5). I created a table with the categories in the far left column and the White pre-service teachers’ assigned participants numbers along the row at the top. I inserted keywords and text excerpts from the narratives into the categories in order to organize the data and also have a visual representation of codes and categories. As I reviewed the data, the categories were refined. This process was used to develop the categories.

Reporting the Findings

The written analysis consists of a review of the findings. The findings include a narration of the salient themes describing the learning experiences of the White pre-service teachers. Overarching themes are reported, along with an interpretation of those themes. A discussion of the findings related to the literature is provided, followed by a conclusion and recommendations for further research.

Validity and Reliability

One of the main assumptions of qualitative research is that the nature of reality is socially constructed and its purpose is to “seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). My role, as the researcher is part of that social construction. In narrative inquiry, the researcher becomes intimately involved with the data in both its collection and interpretation. Thus, in narrative inquiry, reliability refers to the “dependability of the data” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 176). It was important for me, as the researcher, to keep returning to the data and original written narratives throughout the research process.

Another component of dependability is acute attention to the description of the methods employed to conduct the research. “Narrative studies do not have formal proofs of reliability, relying instead on the details of their procedures to evoke an acceptance of the trustworthiness of the data” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 177). Detailed procedural descriptions allows for replication of the research project. Replication speaks to a study’s generalizability.

External validity is dependant upon the generalizability of a research project in quantitative studies. It must be replicated in order to be generalizable. While it is controversial in the research community, Frankel & Wallen (2006) state, “Generalizability is possible in qualitative research, but it is a different type than that found in quantitative research” (p. 445).

Any generalizing that will be done will be by interested practitioners – by individuals who are in situations similar to the one (s) investigated by the researcher. It is the practitioner, rather than the researcher who judges the

applicability of the researcher's findings and conclusions, who determines whether the researcher's findings fit his or her situation. (Frankel & Wallen, 2006, p. 440).

Qualitative studies are sensitive to internal threats to validity. One of those threats is researcher bias "because qualitative research is so dependent on the researcher in both collecting and interpreting information" (Frankel & Wallen, 2006, p. 441). To circumvent this challenge, I, as the researcher was transparent in divulging information regarding processes, procedures and the personal subjectivities I brought to the project.

Regarding research findings in narrative inquiry, validity has been redefined. "A valid finding in narrative research. . . is based on the general understanding of validity as a well-grounded conclusion. . . [which] are most often defended by the use of "informal reasoning" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 175). Findings in narrative inquiry are based on recurrent themes embedded in the data. Thus, findings are presented in terms of the criteria of pattern theories and the term "transferability" replaces the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how White pre-service teachers construct knowledge and make meaning out of their experiences while serving as tutors at an afterschool tutoring program in which 100% of the students were Black/African American. The findings from this study are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how White pre-service teachers construct knowledge and make meaning out of their experiences while serving as tutors at an after school tutoring program in which 100% of the students were Black/African American. Critical Race Theory and Constructivism were the theoretical frameworks used to anchor the study. This chapter presents the findings of this study. The data for this study were collected from written reflective journals penned by White pre-service teachers throughout a twelve-week period in which they were dispatched to serve as tutors at an Afterschool Program that served Black/African American middle school students. An analysis of the data yielded the following themes relative to the White pre-service teachers' reflections and knowledge construction: Assumptions, Teaching Techniques, Relationships, Behavior/Discipline Issues, Race, and Supporting or Challenging the Master Narrative.

Assumptions are the previously held sets of ideas that the White pre-service teachers brought to the tutoring experience. The Teaching Techniques theme highlights the storied accounts the White pre-service teachers reported in regard to their specific tutoring activities with the Black/African American students. The Relationships theme reveals White pre-service teachers' perspectives about the importance of building relationships with the Black/African American students, and how those relationships influence the teaching and learning process. Behavior/Discipline Issues are accounts of behavior management observations and interventions. The theme of Race reveals how the participants discuss the issue of race, racism and diversity in relation to their experiences at the Afterschool Program. The final theme, Supporting or Challenging the Master Narrative, reveals how/if White pre-service teachers confront the majoritarian story in their reflections or interactions with the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program. Due to the study design and its theoretical frameworks, interpretations are interspersed within the presentation of the findings.

Again, constructivism and Critical Race Theory guide and anchor the study. Constructivism or the construction of the White pre-service teachers' knowledge is presented by sharing the culmination of the White pre-service teachers' reflections throughout the duration of their twelve-week experience at the Afterschool Program. Their narrations "center on their lived experiences" (Crotty, 2003, p. 58) in which they "actively create and restructure knowledge. . . which has been assembled from personal experiences, the intellectual, cultural, and social contexts in which these ideas occur, and a host of other influences. . ." (Windschitl, 2000, p. 99). Because constructivism recognizes knowledge construction as a dynamic process that includes the accumulation

of experiences, the White pre-service knowledge construction is revealed by examining their narratives over the course of their twelve-week experience. How they constructed knowledge and what they learned are presented in the findings, intermittently discussed, but more closely examined in the discussion section that specifically addresses White pre-service teachers' learning.

Similarly, Critical Race Theory is fully discussed in the sections that explicitly discuss race and the master narrative, but also considers data from the themes that precede those discussions, as the data from the preceding themes also reveal elements relative to race and the transmission of the majoritarian story.

Theme One: Assumptions

Assumptions – Introduction

Each of the White pre-service teachers in this study brought assumptions about the Black/African American students to the tutoring environment. Assumptions are statements and stories that indicate a previously held set of notions or ideas. In this study's findings, those assumptions seemed to be interpretations of events, assessments about a student(s), and other circumstances that were not in accordance with their pre-existing expectations. The assumptions were often stated as facts or implied within the frameworks of the narratives themselves. Often the assumptions were not followed by counternarratives or alternative views, and appeared to be blanket statements. Based on an analysis of the findings, in most instances, the White pre-service teachers did not reflect on or personally challenge their own assumptions. However, by observing and interacting with the Black/African American students, it appeared that some of the White pre-service teachers' assumptions had been dislodged.

This section is designed to discuss assumptions that fell within the following specific sub-categories: initial assumptions; assumptions that underestimated the Black/African American students' abilities; assumptions about the level of difficulty of the students' homework assignments; and assumptions that seemed to be constructed on the basis of some kind of perceived cultural deficit. While some of the assumptions were culled from the prompt that sought to have the White pre-service teachers identify something that surprised them, other assumptions were imbedded within the storied narratives themselves.

How can this study be certain that the White pre-service teachers brought assumptions to the tutoring site based on race? It can be asserted that White pre-service teachers might have had the same assumptions about working with White students in a suburban community. It is important to address this issue on the front end of the presentation of the findings.

Critical Race Theory's central tenet is that racism exists. It is so imbedded in the culture, that it appears "ordinary and normal to persons in the culture" (Delgado, & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi). Because racism is so ingrained in the fabric of society, it affects personal objectivity, as well as the abilities of the collective to be objective in "seeing" it. It is similar to an artist's perspective when drawing "negative space". The artist draws what is not there, in order to identify what is there. I would challenge the readers to scrutinize the assumptions, and subsequent themes, and re-position the contextual setting of the urban Afterschool Program to that of a White suburban or upper middle class setting. And, then ask yourselves, would these types of assumptions, speculations, and reflections be made about White students attending private schools? Would pre-service

teachers be “surprised” that the students could read or handle challenging abstract intellectual tasks? Would their speculations about misbehavior have the same tenor? Would they assume that parents did not care about their children, simply because the children misbehaved or failed to conform to a normative standard? Or would certain types of misbehaviors be identified as positive attributes, such as indicators of innovation, initiative, independence or creative thinking? Please, in your mind’s eye, as you read this, vacillate between contextual settings, as you review the White pre-service teachers’ narrative excerpts and their interpretations about the students with whom they are working. See if you can “see”.

Initial Assumptions

All of the White pre-service teachers voiced their first reactions to being dispatched to the tutoring site. Most of them expressed fear, anxiety or indicated some sort of preconceived notion about the types of students with whom they would come into contact. A strong theme among all of them was that it was not what they had expected. Some indicated that they had anticipated a certain “type” of child, specifically students with whom it would be difficult to work. Nigel wrote,

Today was the first day of my lab experience. It was much different from what I expected. . . I kind of expected these kids to be problem kids that did not want to learn, but I do not think that that was the case here.

Another more extreme preconception was written by Nancy who recognized that she brought personal assumptions with her to the experience. As with Nigel, her assumptions were neutralized during her first tutoring session. She wrote,

Would my assumptions of the student be correct? I don't know if I was expecting them to be the juvenile delinquents of [Midwestern City] or what, but I was flat out wrong. My fears were diminished as soon as I walked in the door. These kids were normal, healthy, children with homework.

Travis' first journal entry is similar to the other pre-service teachers' assumptions in his statement, "I figured. . . they would be rowdy, but the girl I tutored was the total opposite."

Angel shares a storied account of her first day and how she responded to her anxiety. Angel's first journal entry stated,

The situation that caused the greatest anxiety for me was at the beginning when we were going to the students we would be tutoring for the day. When I looked around, there was one student who did not have one, who was Olivia. I think that she is great, and she is really smart, but she is slight (sic) intimidating as a student. She is very outspoken and does not take much from the other boys who are in the group, so at first I was a little intimidated to go over to her. Once I got started however, I realized that she is a seventh grade girl who is here to get tutored. . .

Jane also expressed her anxiety on the first day by stating, "At first today, I felt really awkward there. I was afraid that kids would not like me."

While some White pre-service teachers expressed that their assumptions had been dislodged, others seemed to backslide and ended their semester experience with a view that seemed to be imbued with the preconceptions they brought with them to the tutoring sessions. For example, Nancy expected "juvenile delinquents". She appears to have

dislodged her assumption by identifying the students as “normal, healthy children with homework” in her first journal entry. However, in her final journal entry she identified the students as “difficult kids. . . [who] were not particularly excited to be given supplemental assistance.” In contrast, Nigel initially expected “problem kids who did not want to learn” as he noted in his first journal. However, his final journal entry stated “These kids are really cool, and they make me want to become a teacher even more”.

In addition to the White pre-service teachers’ initial assumptions about the students, as stated in the introduction of this section, they also expressed other preconceived notions. These assumptions were inductively interpreted based on the content of the storied narratives that provided detailed accounts of their interactions with the Black/African American students. Those assumptions are examined in the following sub-sections.

Assumptions – Underestimated Student Potential

While an examination of the White pre-service teachers’ initial assumptions revealed the perceptions they brought with them as tutors to the Afterschool Program, it is also important to explore the assumptions that they held throughout the course of the twelve-week experience and how those assumptions are narrated within the context of the weekly journal entries.

A strong reoccurring pattern in the White pre-service teachers’ journals was their surprise at the academic abilities of the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program. By the nature of their exclamations and narratives, it can be inferred that the White pre-service teachers had assumptions that expected the

Black/African American students enrolled in the program to perform at lower levels motivationally, intellectually, and academically.

Time and time again, a predominant assumption included the White pre-service teachers' surprise at the unexpected initiative, diligence and endurance of the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program. In Angela's third reflection, she wrote, ". . . Olivia got up for about five to ten minutes after we were finished with her worksheets to talk to the minister in the church. . . The event that took me by surprise was that when Olivia came back, she got right back to work making flashcards for her social studies notes." Kaled reports "[the] event that took [him] by complete surprise was. . . the student who had already finished the two exercises that were assigned, decided that she wanted to do more". The following week Kale is surprised again when another student "worked on this [homework] very diligently and did it without complaint. . . he wanted to get the work done. . . that wasn't due for another 3 days, this was a great thing to see because it means he doesn't procrastinate and let things get out of hand." Subsequently, Kale reflected about the same student on two different occasions. In one entry, we wrote,

The event that took me by surprise was when I asked Jacob if he wanted to take a break from reading, he replied that he didn't want to stop reading. It was a great thing to hear because he wanted to continue to learn and read.

The following week, Kale wrote,

[Jacob] was not attracted to the other students playing games and receiving candy, he worked hard throughout the entire day. It was shocking to see that he didn't want to stop learning and wanted to finish his work.

He later wrote, “The point this week that. . . caught [me] off guard. . . was when we did an activity as a group about how much they could remember learning”.

After Kale reports being “surprised” by student achievement, intellect, diligence and endurance for seven consecutive weeks, in the following journal he seems to be getting “less” surprised at Jacob and the other student’s by writing “This week I was not really surprised, but if anything were close it would be that when I asked him if he wanted to read he didn’t mind doing it” followed by “If I had a chance to do something differently this week, I would have made Jacob. . . read longer.” Now, Kale seemed to “raise the bar”. It appeared that Kale is no longer surprised by student aptitude, diligence, and ability and is beginning to expect more from the students.

Even when a White pre-service teacher thought he was “challenging” the students and raising the bar, the student in the Afterschool Program rose to the occasion. One reflection illustrating this point is provided by Nigel regarding a Scrabble game during the 7th week of the program in his statement

. . . I did something a little different jus[t] to try to get his brain working. I told him that if he used all the letters on his tray to make a word, than (sic) I would bring him a candy bar of his choice next Monday. I really did not expect this to happen, but I now owe him a [S]nickers candy bar next week. To my surprise, Kolby was really good at this game, and he played the word vinegar. I was not sure if he had spelt (sic) it write (sic), so I looked it up, but he was correct.

The intellectual and abstract thinking of one Black/African American student surprised one of the White pre-service teachers as indicated in the following narrative.

The moment in which I was most surprised was when we were working on her English. [Ruby] was to give the word tolerance, human characteristics. . . After reading what she wrote, I was surprised at how well she understood the concept.

Another type of assumption related to ability is penned by Nancy who deduced that one of the students in the program had a learning disability. She wrote, I am not sure if Junior has a learning difference or not, but part of me thinks he does. I was considering minoring in special education. Working with him gave me an opportunity to experience a little bit of what that may look like later in my life.

Nancy reflected on his academic aptitude without providing any specific information about her interaction with Junior on which to base her assessment. Also, Nancy's reflection is extracted from the journal she penned after her second tutoring session and her first encounter with this specific student. A counter narrative is supplied by Anne who wrote, "He didn't need any help with his homework so I just sat and helped him look up words. . . a very nice kid. . . who I enjoyed working with."

Interestingly, within the course of the semester, as the Education Coordinator, I, was approached by three Black/African American male students' parents who indicated that their children had been referred to the school guidance counselor by their teachers in order to get tested for some type of learning disability. I voiced this to the Children's Youth Minister, citing the statistics outlined by Kunjufi (2003) in which he identified the disproportionate ratio of Black/African American males placed in special education programs in contrast to Whites.

These narratives revealed the common theme that illustrated that the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program exceeded the

expectations of the White pre-service teachers. From this, it may be deduced that the White pre-service teachers underestimated the potential and the ability of the Black/African American students enrolled in the program.

Assumptions – Middle School Content is Easy

Another predominant theme voiced by most of the White pre-service teachers in their tutoring experience was in reference to the challenges they encountered with the content of the middle school student's homework and other materials, such as ISTEP test preparation packets. (The ISTEP packet is a practice test of tests designed to assist students prepare for a standardized test. The packet materials were supplied by the Afterschool Program's director, the Children's Youth Minister). Due to the difficulty of the material, they commented how they were challenged, frustrated and felt uneasy about not being as helpful to the Black/African American students as they had hoped. From these statements, it appears that the White pre-service teachers did not anticipate the level of difficulty, and perhaps assumed that they would be able to easily master the middle schooler's academic content in order to help the Black/African/American students enrolled in the program. The White pre-service teachers' assumptions regarding their expectations of a less challenging array of academic content is highlighted in the following excerpted narratives.

In Anne's first journal entry, she wrote,

"The situation that caused me the most stress. . . Not knowing how to help the student with their assignment makes me feel awful. [If] I can't remember how to do something how is the student supposed to know how to complete the homework."

The following week, Anne reported the same challenge and revealed, “We just worked on ISTEP prep. . . [it] was hard for me [because I] did not know for [sure what] some of the words me[an]t that they were supposed to define during the practice. I had to go get a dictionary to make sure I was defining the words right. I felt like I couldn’t help him. . . much.

In Nigel’s second journal he stated,

[T]he kids were provided with a packet of ISTEP preparation English section.

This was all about reading comprehension, and vocabulary. This was not a good day for me to go, because my reading comprehension scores are really low.

White pre-service teachers also reported being challenged in the areas of math and English. For example, in Travis’ third journal he wrote “I am not very good at math so I had a really hard time trying to explain it to her and I started to get frustrated”. In his sixth journal he reports

I was helping [a student] with her English packet and there was this one party (sic) that I didn’t understand even though I kept looking at and I began to get really frustrated. However this time I asked for someone else to help her and even they had trouble with it.

Jane echoed the same sentiment regarding Kolby’s math homework that included working with Roman numerals. After her second tutoring session she wrote, “Kolby asked me to come help him [with math]. However, it wasn’t as easy as I thought it would be.” Nancy reported that she worked with Olivia “on. . . math homework. Math has never clicked as a strong point for me”. Nancy found it difficult to understand “exactly what the book was asking.” And Anne reported “that it had been a very long time since [she had]

seen or done math problems like this. . . [Jabez] seemed to know how to do and did it well”.

Angel also voices her frustration in her narrative that reads,

I worked with Ruby on English and a few math worksheets. She did not bring her book for the English worksheets, and I could not remember the different kinds of sentences that were on her worksheet (simple, complex, and compound sentences). I helped when I could, but I could not provide much input. When we switched to the math worksheets, I was able to help her more, but then we came across some tougher ones. . . This situation made me feel useless. . . I could not help her complete her homework.

Kale sums it up in his fourth journal by commenting, “If I had a chance to do anything differently, the only thing would have been to bring a scientific calculator because the math was not easy.”

The White pre-service teachers’ narratives reveal a collective voice that indicated they were challenged by the content of the homework and the ISTEP test materials that were required of the Black/African American middle school students. It appeared that they assumed that the homework and other materials would have been easier. They did not expect the middle school students to have homework assignments that college students might find challenging. Based on this lower level academic expectation, these findings revealed, again, that White pre-service teachers, perhaps, underestimated the academic potential of the Black/African American students. Thus, an inference from these findings revealed that the White pre-service teachers expected lower levels of academic acumen from the Black/African American students. It could be

concluded that these lower expectations are based on the assumption that, first of all, Black/African American students would not be assigned such challenging assignments. And secondly, they would not be expected to be able to complete them. Perhaps the White pre-service teachers expected the students to be enrolled in lower academic tracks, as is indicated in the literature on Black/African American achievement (Love, 2003; Kunjufu, 2003). This conclusion works in tandem with the following section that reveals the findings about deficit model thinking.

Assumptions – Culturally Deficient Students

Preconceptions that relate to deficit model thinking are based on assumptions that Black/African American students are culturally, socially and academically inferior to members of the White dominant culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Yosso, 2005). Culturally deficient, “disadvantaged” or “at risk” are some of the common terms in the literature that imply that Black/African American students are lacking some resource valued by the White dominant culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Hollins, 1990). A strong reoccurring pattern in the White pre-service teachers’ narratives conveyed the misconception that the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program were lacking some type of cultural resource. The range of presumed resource deficits cited included the following areas: academic, social, cultural, emotional, and familial.

While some White pre-service teachers might not have explicitly made blatant statements that position minority students as inferior, many did by proxy, in positioning themselves as superior.

Nancy positions herself as a role model and an investor in the lives of the Black/African American students in her statement,

I think it is such a unique opportunity to be positive role models in the lives of these students. For most of them, that is a resource they do not have outside of their parents. Or even if their parents try to come alongside them, sometimes they just aren't sure what the child needs. I think the more people who are able to invest into their lives, the better.

Angel echoed the role model theme and wrote,

As for role models, I think that it is a great thing having tutors from college go there who can show them the importance and greatness of being able to go to college. We are able to share our experiences if they want to know, or they are able to ask us any questions over homework or situations that they want."

Angel's statement implies that these students have access to few role models who attend college. It seems that she does not consider the possibility that the Black/African American students might have family or community members with college experiences. Thus, these inferences revealed is that the White pre-service teachers assumed that they could bring assets to the Black/African American students that were presumably unavailable to them from their local communities (family, extended family, and church community). Thus, both Nancy and Angel assumed that the Black/African American students were lacking social and academic role model resources that might serve to support or guide them in their pursuit of educational needs.

Nigel speaks to an expectation based on social and cultural values in this reflection,

I received three thankyou's (sic), and they were the three from whom I would have expected them from. I do understand that these kids weren't always taught manners and all of that stuff when they were little, so I didn't really expect it.

Anne's fifth reflective journal provided a narrative about working with Jabez. Her reflection revealed her perspective and interpretation about the student's lack of family support. She wrote,

Right before we started his math homework his mom came into the building to talk to another lady and to get some work done. After that happened, Jabez was very distracted and kept telling me that his mom was there to take him home. It took a lot from me to get to get him to actually concentrate on his math problems and get them done. [Then] it was time for him to write in his journal. He was very reluctant to write in it. . . he always complains that he doesn't like to write. It makes me nervous about how much he doesn't like to write or to even read.

Anne, then moves from reporting on Jabez's lack of interest in writing to interpreting Jabez from a deficit model perspective. She assumed that he did not recognize the value of education. In her assessment that stated,

He doesn't think that it is very important in his schooling. When in all reality it is the most important thing to know how to do. I hope that he is just in a slump and will soon grow out of it.

Anne then, reflected on the interpretive assumption that she created and added,

. . . it makes me wonder how much his parents are pushing him and telling him how important school really is. . . but it really seems to me that he doesn't care at all and is just doing it because he has to.

From this brief encounter with Jabez, Anne has concluded Jabez is deficient because he seemed to deviate from her normative expectations regarding homework completion. She did not report that Jabez made any statements about how he felt about school, learning, or the importance of his education. She seemed to be projecting her frustration onto the student in the form of a deficit interpretation based on the student's behavior. She then made the mental leap that extended her interpretation beyond the student's immediate behavior, and applied the interpretation to Jabez's mother.

A culturally sensitive teacher, who understands the value of family in the Black/African American culture, might have recognized that the presence of the student's mother as an indicator of her interest and involvement in her child's life and education. Additionally, a culturally responsive teacher, who understands the importance of valuing student voice, might have chosen to engage the student in a brief dialogue about the student's mother in order to get to know the student on a more personal level. Incidentally, Jabez's mother is the founder of the local community action group, Action for Education. It was designed to address the needs of the Black/African American male student population and the local school community's lack of advocacy for that group of students.

A contrasting perspective was offered by Angel who reflected in her sixth journal entry,

I have noticed some of the resources that [Olivia] does have. . . a support system. I have actually never seen her mom before, but she has cousins that work within the church who are supportive of her being there and doing her schoolwork, and family adult friends that have walked into the church and talk

with her.

Later within the same entry, Angel further wrote,

Spiritually, I think that I can draw that most of these kids have at least some spiritual background since the Afterschool Program is held at a church. I know that Olivia and a few other of the students have talked about being at church and have spoken about other people who go there. Also, since Olivia's cousin works at the church, I assume she has other family that also attends.

Angel's reflections revealed that she recognized that Olivia, as well, as the other Black/African American students seem to have cultural resources that included a spiritual component. While all of the White pre-service teachers went to a church to tutor children who were members of the church, only one of them made mention about the church or spirituality as being a resource. King (2004) points out the importance of spirituality in the Black/African community and further asserts that "the Black church [is] a central pillar of the community" (p. 470).

Another cultural deficiency that emerged as a strong recurring theme was based on White pre-service teachers reflections that seemed to perceive that the Black/African American student enrolled in the program had an aversion to learning and did not seem to value education. This is consistent with a summation by Ogbu (1990) who stated that "minorities have not developed a widespread effort optimism or strong cultural ethic of hard work and perseverance in the pursuit of education" (p. 53). This was illuminated in the first part of Anne's reflection about Jabez in the previous paragraphs. John echoed this type of assumption in his work with Ezra. John wrote, "[H]e had that I don't (sic) care attitude and didn't want to be there attitude so it was hard to get him to work".

In Kale's second reflection he wrote about feeling really upset to find that my student was not that interested in what we would be working on. . . ISTEP prep and she really didn't want to get in the mood to do it. She was disinterested and just wanted to eat her food. I found that in order to get her to do her homework, we had to tell her that there was no other choice. . . and she would have to do this no matter what. . . She really didn't like that and after grading her packet I found many mistakes all pertaining to her guessing.

It appeared that Kale did not honor the student's interest finishing her snack, and put more emphasis on working on the ISTEP packet. He implied that the student was not interested in academia. Later in this entry, he revealed that he engaged her in dialogue and reflected how his collaborative approach fostered a shift in how the student responded to him. He wrote feeling connected when, "working with [Demetria]. . . on math ISTEP. . . we went through at least 4 different exercises. . We worked together and she went from being the toughest person to work with to the easiest person to talk to."

Nancy made the following assessment based on her observations and interaction with Junior. She claimed, "[Junior]. . . hates to read, he hates to write, and he especially hates being told to read or write." Both Kale and Nancy failed to reflect on the students' assignments; critique the content; or comment about the nature and/or relevancy of the tasks that they asked the students to undertake. It appeared that they assumed the Black/African American students did not value education or learning. They did not report that the students *stated* that they "hated to read" or they "were disinterested," those were inferences the White pre-service teachers made on interpretations of the Black/African American students' behavior. Rather than challenging or questioning the content or value

of the tasks assigned, they critique the students and conclude that the students have deficiencies in academic interest.

Furthermore, they seemed to be unaware of a teaching technique that engages a student in dialogue in order to assist in the writing process. According to King's (2004) review of the literature, it has been demonstrated that there are "positive effects drawing on oral narrative competencies of African American. . . students to produce higher quality written narratives" (p. 473). Critical Race Scholars would also take issue with adherence to this normative demand that doesn't consider alternative approaches that recognize or validate alternative forms of assessment, particularly the value of voice and narrative discourse.

Anne reflected on Jabez and his approach to his social studies homework. She wrote,

[Jabez] had to complete a map of Africa by filling in the names of the countries along with there capitols. He had to do 30 of the countries, at first he started out doing the bigger countries with the shortest names and the shortest capitol names. I kept asking him why he wasn't filling in all the countries in one area of the map and he kept saying the name was too long to write in the space. This made me laugh to myself because he didn't realize that he was going to have to fill out pretty much all the countries minus a few. So although he was thinking he was doing it the easy way, I think in a way it took him longer to go through and pick out the ones he thought were easier at the time, instead of just doing them all.

Anne surmised that Jabez was "doing it the easy way" and "laughed to herself" based on her perception "that he would do most of the countries except a few". She did not seem to

know that there are 54 countries in Africa. So, after Jabez identified 30 countries, he would leave 24 unidentified, “not just a few”. It seemed that the student exhibited efficiency and was not taking the easy way out. Her assumption about Jabez’s approach seemed to help her to view him as someone who was not working hard, and deficient in academic motivation. When he tried to explain his reasoning, she “laughed to herself” seemingly ignoring his voice.

Summary

From these narratives, it can be concluded that the White pre-service teachers illustrate cultural awareness/responsiveness deficits. This seemed to result from not recognizing or validating the voices and perspectives of the Black/African American students in the teaching and learning process. Being unable to recognize and respond to the students’ perspectives, revealed that, perhaps, these White pre-service teachers were not educated about cultural awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness to Black/African American students. Due to this lack of understanding, they seemed to perceive the students from a deficit model perspective.

Counterstories Challenge Assumptions

The cultural deficit model is a product of the dominant culture. It endures because, often, there are no counterstories or counternarratives provided to challenge and disrupt the storied accounts that perpetuate deficit model thinking (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Critical Race Theory values and employs counterstories in order to bring light to alternative perspectives and interpretations. As noted in the assumption’s introduction of this section, many times, the White pre-service teacher narratives did not offer alternative views about students or situations. Additionally, sometimes they did not recognize the

possibility that their (the White pre-service teachers') actions, attitudes and responses might have played a role in how they experienced students or situations. Inadvertently, this seemed to influence some of the learning experiences.

While learning might be defined or identified as a change in behavior or perception, it might also be defined as "re-learning" via the reinforcement of expressed belief or exhibited behavior. Dewey (1938) suggests that this type of learning is "mis-educative" because this type of re-learning arrests or distorts the possibility of further growth. An examination of the structure of the White pre-service teachers' journals assists in identifying learning of this type. According to Bogdan & Biklen (2007), qualitative research provides the researcher with the option of exploring omissions and contradictions because they "sometimes convey something about beliefs" (p. 178).

To illustrate how this is applied to this study, the next narrative is a full journal entry written by Jane. It is followed by a counterstory based the culturally sensitive insights and approaches to working with and on the behalf of Black/African American students, as outlined in Gloria-Ladson Billings' (1994) book *The Dreamkeepers*. According to Swartz and Bakari (2005), inner-city students bring specific cultural orientations and behaviors into the classroom. Gay (2002) asserts that culturally responsive teachers recognize and use the "cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106). Jane's narrative is juxtaposed against a counterstory based on how a culturally responsive teacher might have observed the experience. This approach is employed to reveal the beliefs Jane expressed about working with a Black/African American student, revealing a lack of growth or the reification of previous learning.

In keeping with the narrative approach to this research project, it seemed fitting to provide a practical application of how a counterstory might be employed to understand what one White pre-service teacher was learning in her experience, and in contrast, not learning, as expressed in the counternarrative. This framework is used as an example of how the counter narrative is used as a method to reinterpret an experience from the perspective of a culturally responsive teacher as outlined and previously employed by the following educators: Soloranzo & Yosso (2005); Yosso, et al (2004); Soloranzo & Yosso (2001); Ladson-Billings (1994); Gay (2002); & Sleeter (1995).

Jane's Narrative

Today I worked with Junior again. He was having a really bad day. He did not have his tracking sheet out. I asked him nicely to fill it out for the week. He started to, but he kept getting distracted. I kept trying to steer him back to it. He said he was done and handed it back to me, but there were only two days filled out. I told him he had to fill it out for the whole week. He got mad and said it was stupid. Miss Dahlia came over and tried to explain that I just meant well and that the tracking sheets are meant to help him. She told him it was ok that he didn't have them done this week, but he would have to have it completed for next week. So I asked him to get out his math homework. He pulled it out, but he started crying. I tried to get him to talk to me, but he wouldn't. Miss Dahlia came back over, but he wouldn't talk to her either. [The Children's Youth Minister, an Black/African American male] called Junior into his office to talk. When [Junior] came back I started helping him with his homework, but he still didn't want to work. The lead tutor, Kamille, came over and started asking him what was wrong

too. He started crying again. Though she got him to admit that a teacher had hurt his feelings. She told him that he didn't have to work for the day and took him away to the upper part of the church. . . They came back down stairs about fifteen minutes later and Kamille told me to help him with his homework. I finally got him to do his work, but it took a lot of effort to get him to respond. I felt disconnected the entire day. There wasn't really a moment I felt connected at all. I couldn't get through to Junior at all. I felt like I was useless. I couldn't get him to listen, to do his work, to calm down when he was crying. I still don't fully understand why he burst into tears. It was a huge surprise. Nothing I did calmed him. I was glad Miss Kamille got him to talk, but I don't think it was right to tell him that he didn't have to work today, take him away, and then bring him back and have me tutor him again. If she was going to take over, then she should have kept with it in my opinion. Especially since he was working better for her than he was for me. I just got really frustrated today and was glad when it was finally over.

Jane's Narrative – A Counter Story

A culturally sensitive teacher might have been able to better empathize with Junior and respond in a manner that supported and validated his feelings about being “hurt” by a teacher in school that day. From this narrative, it appeared that Junior was frustrated with school and the authority figure at school, his teacher who “hurt his feelings”. When this came to light, it seems that a culturally sensitive teacher might have backed off a little regarding the homework and tracking sheet, and addressed Junior as a whole child, beyond his role as a student. It appeared that Miss Kamille, Miss Dahlia and

the Children's Youth Minister illustrated this type of intervention when they tried various approaches to help Junior on an emotional level. A culturally sensitive teacher might have recognized the importance of counsel with the Children's Youth Minister and the other adults who were all Black/African American members of the church (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

It appeared that Jane did not seem to recognize teaching as a community effort accomplished through group effort by adults who should not only support the student, but should also support each other in helping the student. A culturally sensitive teacher might recognize that Miss Kamille was responding to Junior in a manner that heard and responded to his voice about the disconcerting events that had occurred at school. It seemed that Miss Kamille and the other adults were being flexible and trying different ways to work with Junior. When one technique did not work, they tried another, until Junior was, once again, able to focus on his work. Contrasting this perspective, was Jane's assessment of the situation, as illustrated in her comment that defined Miss Kamille's intervention as "taking over". "Taking over" seems to imply some type of territorial dispute that infers that the student is the property of one adult, as opposed to a person who might need support from a collective community. In the Black/African community, the "It takes a village to raise a child" ideology is recognized and practiced (Ladson-Billings, 1994). It appeared that Jane was not aware of this in theory or practice.

In this journal entry, Jane stated that Junior had not completed the tracking sheet and thought "it was stupid". His statement appeared to challenge the status quo and the normative standard that required that all students complete all tracking sheets every week (Love, 2003). Here, again, the other adults involved seemed to allow latitude fueled by

sensitivity for the individual's unique situation. This flies in the face of the "one-size-fits-all" approach to education that does not seem to honor the student's voice or individual circumstance (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The approaches employed by the church community members did not seem to force the student to conform or perform within the constraints of predisposed expectations. For example, they allowed latitude with completing the tracking sheet, and permitted Junior to "go to the upper part of the church" and out of the tutoring area for a few minutes.

Jane had previously expressed an opinion about Junior prior to this tutoring session. In a previous journal entry, she identified Junior as a "decent kid. . . but, seems like a slow learner" and that using a tracking sheet "would be a good thing" for Junior. So, here Jane has assessed Junior from a deficit perspective and, then, identified a remedy that she feels might benefit him. This assessment might have fueled her approach and subsequent responses to Junior's behavior (Soloranzo, 1997).

Another example of Jane's predisposition toward Junior was written the week prior to this entry. She implied that Junior was lying about his school experience. She wrote,

He pulled out three chapters worth of work and claimed that the teacher had given that to them all that day because the teacher was in a bad mood. I guess he was trying to pull a fast one on me, but it was plain to me that he just had not been doing his work all year. I did not say anything about it. I just started helping him plough (sic) through it.

Jane surmised that Junior had not done his work "all year." She "did not say

anything about it” and began to help him “[plow] through it”. So, it seemed that she embraced her assumption that he had not done any work all year, as truth without asking the student for more information about his individual situation. A culturally sensitive teacher might have used this as an opportunity to obtain a better understanding of the student and his school experience by engaging in dialogue about his teacher or the essence of this specific day in which the teacher “was in a bad mood”. Instead, it seemed that Jane honored the voice of the master narrative that tends to silence the oppressed and validate the oppressor. Incidentally, this journal was penned on October 11, which means that “all year” would have been eight full weeks of homework assignments.

Jane stated, “I tried to get him to talk to me.” However, she did not detail the essence of her approach with Junior. In contrast, she details the approaches used by Miss Kamille, Miss Dahlia, and the Children’s Youth Minister, that appeared to be a more receptive, responsive and supportive audience for this student’s confidences.

Jane seems to internalize this experience as a personal failure. She stated feeling “useless” and disconnected because she “couldn’t get through to Junior. . . couldn’t get him to listen, to do his work. . . [or] to calm down when he was crying”. It appeared that she placed the responsibility of her emotions of the reaction and non-reaction of the student. Interestingly enough, she also previously stated that “Junior’s attitude really surprised me. The fact that he has a tendency (sic) to blame other people for things that are obviously not their fault, I found quite odd.” Jane wrote this about her first encounter with Junior that lasted approximately one hour.

A culturally sensitive teacher might have had an entirely different experience than the one conveyed by Jane. Her narrative expression seemed to be devoid of cultural

awareness. It appeared that her journal entry exclusively focused on all of the things that did not happen as she had hoped and expected. A contrasting view illustrating cultural sensitivity might have included reflections about how it might have felt for a middle school male to cry in front of his peers at an Afterschool Program; a focused look at finding out how the student experienced school that day; discussing the interventions that the various church community members tried to employ from a positive perspective; or recognizing the value of the relationship between the student and church community members as supportive caring adults. It appeared that those perspectives were not in Jane's immediate awareness.

A detailed unpacking of Jane's narrative at a granular level is provided as an example how a counter story might be used as an interpretative scheme in order to provide an alternative perspective from a culturally sensitive perspective. This approach was based on the work of educators who advocate for the preparation of culturally responsive teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Yosso, 2002; Gay, 2000; & Sleeter, 1995).

Theme Two: Teaching Techniques

Introduction

All of the White pre-service teacher journals provided storied accounts of their teaching and tutoring activities with the Black/African American students. However, there were variations on their conveyance of those interactions. The range included the 1) simple conveyance of events; 2) expanded descriptions of teaching methods that illustrated creative approaches to teaching; 3) teaching techniques that positively influenced the relationships between the White pre-service teachers and the

Black/African American students using a collaborative approach; and 4) pitfalls and taking responsibility when creative responsive approaches were not employed.

Conveyance of Events

Examples of the simple conveyance of events were expressed with little reflection. For example, John stated, “we watched a movie.” And in assisting a student with homework he stated, “I told him he needed to put more than just key terms in the book.” Another similar account is provided by Travis who reported, “I don’t really have much to say because everyone just played games for the last 45 minutes of tutoring session” and that he helped a student with the ISTEP packet. Neither White pre-service teacher offered additional reflection or information about those teaching encounters. The course instructor responded to Travis’ journal by informing him that it was more of a “report” than a reflection. She also mentioned that he did not respond to any of the prompts. His “reflections” had the same level of depth throughout the semester.

Another type of reflection used to describe teaching techniques is illustrated by Jane, who wrote of her frustration while working with Demetria on a vocabulary assignment. In addition to reporting on the teaching interaction, she also reflected on her perception of the student’s reaction to her approach. She wrote,

There were about twenty-four of these words. [Demetria] didn't know what they meant and she didn't want to learn. She simply wrote down the first two. I tried to get her to read the definitions of them, but she wouldn't. So I just told her to go on to a different problem while I tried to figure out the first problem so that I could help her understand it. Once [I] figured it out and tried to explain it she really didn't care about how it was done. It was really frustrating working with someone

who obviously didn't want to be there and didn't want to take my help. . . I should have had her actually read all of the definitions (sic), had her explain them to me, and then do the problem. It has taught me to stand my ground. As a teacher you can't let the students bully you. . .

While Jane provided a description of the teaching interaction, she does not explicitly state the methods she employed in her attempt to “teach” Demetria, other than “I told her to go to a different problem” and “tried to explain it to her”. The narrative structures of Travis and Jane’s journals did not include reflections that grapple with her own subjectivities or teaching techniques. As mentioned previously, Bogdan & Biklen (2007), assert that “structures [participants] choose to organize their stories. . . reveal something about their beliefs. . . [particularly] when there are contradictions or omissions.

Jane wrote 5,788 words throughout the twelve-week period. While she reflected on how students responded to her, she only once stated that she, herself, would have done something differently (as noted in the above narrative) and did not once point out how what she was learning might be applied to her future classroom. From these omissions, it appeared that Jane did not engage in self-reflection about her own teaching practice or the approaches she took with the students. The focus of Jane’s reflection seemed to be a reflection about the student, and little reflection about herself or the specific teaching techniques she used. Ladson-Billings (1994) reminds us that “telling isn’t teaching” (p. 121). She shares an account similar to Jane’s “telling technique” and suggests that this approach does not recognize “the hierarchal relationship” between the teacher and the

student when knowledge transmission is a “one way” enterprise in which the teacher instructs and the student learns (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 126).

Based on an analysis of John, Travis, and Janes’ reflective journals, it can be concluded that they did not seem to approach reflection on the most fundamental level, reflection on the “technical” aspects of teaching (Schon, 1988; Van Manen, 1977; & Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Dewey (1933) posits that reflection must be coupled with the desire to reflect combined with an open-mindedness, otherwise, there are inhibitions to the consideration of other possibilities and alternative perspectives. Failure to broaden the lens “shut[s] out new conceptions. . . and keep [them] from making new observations” (Dewey, 1933, p. 30).

While an examination of Jane’s narrative structure is presented here in the “Teaching Technique” theme, as an example of the “conveyance of events,” it will be revisited in a subsequent section with attention to how the omission of self-reflection communicates values and beliefs about working with Black/African American students, specifically how lack of reflection “may lead a person too readily to fall into prejudices. . . weaken his independent judgment. . . [and] even [lead] to extreme partisanship that regards it as disloyal to question beliefs of a group to which one belongs” (Dewey, 1938, p. 29)

Expanded Descriptions of Teaching Methods – Creative Approaches to Teaching

In contrast to simple descriptions of events, Kale reflected on a specific teaching technique with a creative flair used in his work with Jacob. He wrote,

. . . [W]e worked on some crosswords. . . that dealt with the bones of the body.

For every bone I showed him where it was so that he could use that of a way of

remembering the body. . . [W]hen I asked him where they were he was able to point to the general area and it was obvious that he was learning. . . [W]e were connected for the entire time and we helped each other.

Kale was able to connect the student to the learning; whereas, Jane seemed to encourage rote learning. He described a method that connected the student to the content, while Jane did not employ an approach that might make the vocabulary words relevant to the student. Furthermore, Jane assessed the student as one who “didn’t care” and “didn’t want to be there” or “take her help”. Her reflection seemed to take on a more confrontational flavor in order to elicit the behavior she wanted to see, as opposed to an interactive educative approach, as illustrated by Kale.

Nancy’s third journal reported her interactions with a student who was less than receptive to her attempt to evoke learning.

Teaching is challenging. I could have told you that. But tutoring? Is that really suppose[d] to be difficult. Weeks one and two went by smoothly. This week, I could argue otherwise. I worked with a student who forgot her tracking sheet, boldly told me she didn't like school, and rolled her eyes at everything I said. Great. After I realized that her attitude wasn't going to change if I didn't help her out, I began to try to make vocabulary fun for her. We read the sentences out loud and I questioned her on why they made sense. Another girl I worked with was reading a book where the characters were from Cambodia. I asked her where it was and she did not know. We decided to look it up in the dictionary and see information it could provide. It was a unique opportunity to teach her something that wasn't required but could help her understand the characters in the book.

Rather than reflecting on the non-cooperative spirit of the student, Nancy reflected on the actions she took in fostering the learning process and behavior that she wanted the student to exhibit and provided specific details about her experience.

Most of the White pre-service teachers offered detailed narratives describing how they applied specific teaching techniques to engage the students in homework completion. Angel mentioned the importance of “changing up teaching styles. . . so it becomes fun or more interesting.” While Nancy reflected, “Lets be honest, how much fun is it to come to a classroom that is strictly routine?”

Nigel shared how he showed a student an alternative approach to a math problem. He wrote that he felt connected as a teacher when he, “showed him a trick when multiplying by anything with a zeros at the end. [Kolby] used that method for the rest of the night, and it saved him time.” Jane’s second journal reported that she offered the student additional information about the science content. She wrote, “. . . if he didn’t understand what the text book was saying I explained it to him in a different way. . . Also I tried to give him a little bit more information about things than just what the book said.” In Kale’s first entry he described working on fractions with a student who “just couldn’t comprehend the idea of subtracting them” He, then, “showed her how to do it and a good technique in order to remember” and how the student “took these new abilities and began correcting the following incorrect answers.”

Dee shared a technique she employed to assist a student in the writing process. She wrote,

The boy I was helping also had a hard time putting his thoughts down on paper. I asked him what his thoughts were on the subject, so he could hear them out loud,

and he really had some good opinions. Afterwards it was a little easier for him to write down his thought on the paper. I think that it was a great experience as a teacher; to make the task of homework seem easier and to give him a tool to use, when he gets stuck.

King (2004) points out the importance of engaging Black/African American students in dialogue to assist in the writing process by building on a cultural strength “grounded in African American linguistic traditions” (p. 473).

The White pre-service teachers reflected on the creative teaching methods they used to assist the Black/African American students with their homework. They “changed up styles;” connected the students to the content; offered additional content information beyond the scope of the textbook; engaged a student in conversation as a means to help the student access his own knowledge for a writing assignment; co-constructed knowledge with a student in order to learn about a geographical location; and encouraged a student to correct his own work.

These creative approaches were not simply “bells and whistles” that captured the students’ attention. These approaches all creatively responded to the individual students “by building bridges” that met the students where they were and helped them “participate fully and meaningfully in the construction of knowledge” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 96). Furthermore, these culturally responsive approaches provided “a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles” that validated student voice by responding to the needs of the Black/African American students (Gay, p. 29). Based on the findings in this study, it can be concluded that many of the White pre-service teachers reflected on creative teaching techniques that employed a culturally

responsive timbre in their instructional methods, that “recognized existing strengths and accomplishments of the students and then enhanced them in the educational process” (Gay, 2000). It is important to note that instructional strategies are one component of culturally responsive teaching.

Culturally responsive teaching, also includes explicit reference and connectivity to the Black/African American culture; encouraging a community of learners via collaboration among students; as well as garnering and including local knowledge about the Black/African American students’ families and communities as a valid, and then incorporating it into the learning process (Yosso, 2005; Gay, 2000; & Ladson-Billings, 1994). Based on the data provided by the journals, it did not appear that the White pre-service teachers creative methods included specific references to the Black/African American student’s culture. So, while the White pre-service teachers’ instructional approaches were culturally sensitive in one regard, they fell short in another sense, which will be explored more deeply in a subsequent section.

While the White pre-service teachers seemed particularly vocal about describing their specific teaching strategies, another strong recurring theme within the text of their reflections, included discussions about the relationships what were forged with the Black/African American students that seemed to result from engagement in the teaching and learning processes. The next sub-section extends the discussion of creative teaching techniques and revealed the connection between teaching techniques and building relationships with the Black/African American students.

Teaching Techniques that Fostered Relationships

By engaging in a deeper level of reflection that includes social aspects of the teacher/student relationship, the White pre-service teachers appeared to recognize the connection between their actions and the results of those actions, particularly how their conscious recognition of the spirit of collaboration fostered relationships (Schon, 1988; Van Manen, 1977).

In addition to reflecting on specific teaching techniques, there were many narratives that described a collaborative approach between the White pre-service teachers and the Black/African American students. The collaborative approach seemed to be of a symbiotic nature in which the White pre-service teacher worked *together with* the Black/African American students. While the previous section shares narrative accounts of creative approaches to working with the Black/African American students, this section highlights when the White pre-service teachers cognitively recognized and explicitly referred to the collaboration with the Black/African American students.

Dee reflected on working on a “math problem we couldn’t figure out” and how they “had to work together and talk about many math issues before getting to the right answer”. Dee also reported that there was laughter in the discussion that eventually led them to the right answer.

Angel reflected on working with Olivia on a social studies assignment and described the experience as follows.

Her assignment was filling out a chart and finding different explorers of the world, the date they made their explorations, the place they discovered, and the results of the exploration. We read the section out loud together, which helped

Olivia figure out the answers. When she did not know the exact answer, I was able to ask her questions to get her to say the correct answer.

Nancy's first reflection highlighted the collaborative approach she took with working with Kolby on a social studies assignment.

[He] was quick to write down the first answer he came up with. We talked a few minutes about how sometimes we need to analyze our answers and check them. I encouraged him to always look for more than one answer. On another question, we weren't exactly sure what the teacher was asking for. To reword the question, I had Kolby look up some of the key words in the question so he could better understand what he needed to answer.

Kale mentioned how his collaborative approach fostered a shift in how the student responded to him. He wrote feeling connected when, "working with [Demetria]. . . on math ISTEP and we went through at least 4 different exercises. . . We worked together and she went from being the toughest person to work with to the easiest person to talk to."

Another White pre-service teacher reflected on feeling connected because "[W]e worked on. . . the reading comprehension and vocabulary. . . reading the test together. . . looked up the words together and then figured out the correct answer. I felt engaged with this activity because we worked hard together and found the answers out together."

Dee reflected about her experience working with a student calculating a math problem,

[W]e both really laughed and had fun with the math. I could tell that the student was enjoying the moment and was having fun with his homework. He is very

good at math, so I praised him a lot and you could tell that he was proud. I feel very proud. . . that I was able to connect with him and make him enjoy his homework.

The findings revealed that the White pre-service teachers who worked “with” the students “together” in completing homework and other activities found that this approach was not only helpful in assisting the students learn, but also fostered positive productive relationships. According to Ladson-Billings (1994), culturally relevant teaching is seen as a “shared responsibility” in which the teachers serve as “conductors or coaches” who “are comfortable with sharing the responsibility to help them achieve. . . with the students themselves” (p. 23-24). Culturally responsive teachers believe in collaboration as a fundamental approach to teaching, in both theory and practice. Based on the data from the White pre-service teachers’ journals, it appeared that they recognized the value of a collaborative approach to teaching. Furthermore, it appeared to not only enhance the learning process, but was also helpful in establishing relationships with the Black/African American students. Relationships will be discussed more fully in a subsequent section. For now, this section will report the contrasting findings that were revealed when the White pre-service teachers did not seem to employ creative symbiotic approaches to working with the Black/African American students.

Pitfalls and Taking Responsibility

An alternative perspective of the Teaching Techniques theme is illustrated in the many journal reflections that reported how bored the White pre-service teachers were during the course of their experience at the Afterschool Program. Anne conveyed her boredom working with Olivia and on several other occasions. She wrote,

I felt bored was (sic) when we got all the homework done and there wasn't anything to do. . . I am not familiar with a lot of games that teachers do during class time so I felt a little disadvantaged. It was hard for me to come up with something 7th and 8th graders would like to do.

In subsequent entries, she felt bored when,

[a student] didn't need any help with his homework. He was copying vocabulary words. . . to get ready for a quiz next week. . . I help[ed] him look up a few words but that was about it. I mostly sat around watching him write down the definitions. . . I don't think there is anything I would do any different because I didn't do any teaching. I helped him look up a few different words in his book but that was about the extent of the teaching.

Anne later reflected on her responsibility to set the tone and then added how she would do that in a culturally responsive manner. She wrote,

you have to be very open towards the students for them to open up to you in return. . . [and] act more motivated with the students because if you act like you really want to be there then they will respond to that and what to be there too. I am going to keep trying to incorporate outside things into their homework assignments so they can hopefully get more involved and less bored with school.

However, she later contradicted herself after a challenging moment in which she was unable to engage the student in the learning process. She wrote, "It is hard to get excited with a student who doesn't want to be there".

A contrasting experience was reported by another White pre-service teacher, Kale, who seemed to take responsibility for his feelings of disengagement and recognized how relationships impacted the teaching and learning process. He wrote,

I felt very disconnected this week. . . we really didn't bond like usually (sic) while learning, it was sort of a let down. . . I wanted to see him learning. . . I . . . could have. . . involve[d] myself in his learning, like giving him a quiz over the ones he had already done, so that he could learn right away. . . I learned. . . to become less passive and become more of a leader when trying to help children.

Dee echoes this sentiment in her reflection, "[I] felt most disconnected when the boy read out loud, because neither one of us put any effort into it." Dee seemed to recognize her responsibility in the teaching and learning process. Over time, many others grew to recognize that they played a strong role in creating a productive learning environment.

Angel's journal reflection revealed her boredom and the proactive stance she took in order to dispel the boredom and engage with the students. She reflected,

No one around me seemed to want any help. I had asked several students if they wanted help with anything and they just gave me a blank stare and didn't say anything. . . All the students said that they didn't have much to do, or they would not respond at all. I was not sure how to react to the blank stares. . . So I wandered around until I found someone that I kind of forced myself into helping her. [I learned how important it is to try] to help students even if they are not asking for help. Most of the students that I did ask to help probably had something that they needed to get finished. I know when I am in a situation

where there are people around that I am not the most comfortable with, I . . . would rather do things by myself. . . However, when I do let those people in, it is usually a big help. I need to just continuously be there for my students, and get involved in their work anyway sometimes even if they don't ask for it.

Summary

Based on the data, it seemed that some of the White pre-service teachers were able to accept responsibility for their part in creating a productive learning environment. Several reflected on how their attitudes and outlook impacted the Black/African American students, while others seemed to place blame on the students. Gay (2000) highlights these issues in *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. She discusses the concept of caring; teacher attitudes; and how teachers influence the learning environment. She asserts that the “most effective way to be uncaring and unconcerned is to tolerate and/or facilitate academic apathy and disengagement” (p. 48). It appeared that some of the White pre-service teachers recognized their responsibility for the climate of the learning environment, and shared the methods they employed to communicate they cared by taking proactive steps to engage with the Black/African American students.

The White pre-service teachers provided an array of reflections about their individual approaches to teaching and interacting with the Black/African American middle-schoolers. While some provided a surface account of events, others seemed to reflect more deeply on student receptivity in the learning process, in addition to self-assessments about the teaching techniques they employed. The reflections not only revealed an array of teaching methods and perspectives, they also revealed that over time,

some White pre-service teachers were able to understand how their approaches and attitudes impacted the Black/African American students receptivity to learning. The findings revealed that when White pre-service teachers employed culturally responsive teaching methods that were creative, responsive, and attentive to the needs of the Black/African American students, it not only enhanced the learning processes for both tutor and student, it also fostered positive working relationships.

Theme Three: Relationships

Introduction

The Relationships theme is so closely linked to the categories of “Teaching Techniques” and “Behavior/Discipline Issues”, that it is difficult to untangle them and extract them from the White pre-service teachers’ reflective journals. The contextual nature of relationships is often illustrated via the narrative descriptions that give storied accounts of how those relationships play out in the teaching and learning processes, and also behavior/discipline issues. Therefore, it is from this vantage point, that this section is presented as it shares the findings about the “Relationships” theme, and will be revisited again in the “Behavior/Discipline Issues” section.

One of the strongest overall reoccurring patterns narrated by the White pre-service teachers was illuminated in their reflections about their relationships with the Black/African American students. Some recognized this immediately, while others noticed how working with students over time seemed to enhance students’ learning receptivity, build stronger relationships, which resulted in a more positive experience for both the White pre-service teachers and the Black/African American students.

Often, the relationships theme surfaced in response to the prompt that asked the White pre-service teachers to reflect on moments when they felt connected and disconnected. Other moments of connectivity and references to relationships were imbedded within the storied narratives describing the employ of teaching techniques and behavior modification interventions. Two reoccurring patterns in regard to relationships were reflections on the importance of relationships, in addition to how relationships related to teaching and learning.

Importance of Relationships

The findings revealed that some of the White pre-service teachers recognized the importance of relationships at the onset of their experience at the Afterschool Program. Initial reflections about relationships are as follows.

Nancy reflected on her multicultural education course work, applied it to her role as a tutor, and stated,

“ . . . that no significant learning takes place without a relationship. Through time, I am seeing relationships being formed through the Afterschool Program. . . I look forward to keep building relationships with each of these students as the semester continues.”

After Angela's first tutoring experience, she reflected,

I went and sat with the students and introduced myself and asked them questions about themselves. This allowed for everyone to start learning about each other. It was in the conversations here with the kids that I felt the most connected and affirmed. The kids responded with their answers and asked questions back. I really felt good about being there and thought to myself how important it is to get

to know the students beyond homework. . . to understand where the students are coming from and what interests them.

Based on an analysis of these narratives, it appeared that the White pre-service teachers recognized the importance of building relationships and learning more about the students and “what interests them”. While these White pre-service teachers point out the importance of building relationships with the Black/African American students, the following excerpts reveal how relationship building impacted the teaching and learning interactions. Most of the narratives highlight the White pre-service teachers’ reflections about working with the same Black/African American students over time.

Relationships Related to Teaching and Learning

A strong pattern within the White pre-service teachers’ journals referenced how their relationships with the Black/African American students were forged over time. The reflections also highlight the teaching and learning processes that seemed to result from building relationships.

Travis described his interactions with Opal over time. He reported that at the beginning of the year, “she was pretty shy”. In his second journal he wrote, “At first she was pretty quite [quiet], but after a while she was way more open. . . talking. . . about her weekend and school. . . I think she felt a little more comfortable with me since I helped her last time.” His third entry revealed “she actually opened up to me and was talking to me without me having to engage in the conversation. After we talked for a short while we started on the math packet.”

Travis' fourth entry, again reflected on how "Opal she was pretty shy and kept to herself, however now she is talkative". He then reflected on the teaching and learning process and stated,

[T]oday she had an English packet. . . She had most of it [except] the pages she didn't understand. After I explained to her how to do them she quickly caught on and finished. . . While she was doing the packet she was talking to me and telling me about her day. . . I felt most connected as teacher, because I helped her understand how to do her work and she was comfortable around me.

[Afterwards] we. . . played a game.

In addition to reflections about the longitudinal nature of working with the same student on several occasions, White pre-service teachers also reflected on engaging students in conversation prior to and while doing homework. The dialogue not only helped foster relationships, but also seemed to influence homework completion.

Angel reflected on her third week working with Olivia. Angel stated that she was well-versed in French and

was able to help [Olivia] think of memory tricks to remember the words. . . [and] was quizzing her over the vocabulary while making flashcards in English and a crossword puzzle. She was really into it and wanted to do it the entire time. . . I [also] started to ask her questions getting to know more of her interests. . . so it was a great week for us to build a working relationship.

A similar finding was revealed in Kale's reflection about working with Jacob

for several consecutive weeks. Over time, it seemed that their working relationship improved and resulted in interactions that enhanced Jacob's learning. Kale reflected in his fourth session with Jacob,

It seems that he is lightening up to me and becoming more comfortable every week that we work together. He is becoming more talkative and doing his homework is never a problem. . . we have seemed to make a connection and he seems to listen more to me now.

In Kale's seventh week working with Jacob, he reflected,

. . . I worked with Jacob once again. [W]e worked on. . . social studies. . . As we worked through it he asked for a hand several times, this is when I felt most connected because I helped him find the answers using a method of remembering what the information was describing. He caught on well and he went right through the rest of the packet.

Kale's ninth journal stated "Ever since I taught him to pause after a period or comma, he seems to have picked up on what I have said. . I never really felt disconnected. . . [A]fter we read together. . . [and] looked at a magazine. . . We were able to talk about his interests and we really connected.

Angel reflected after working with Olivia for the fourth time, "I worked again with Olivia. We worked on social studies and math for the time we had together. Every week I feel like I am gaining a better relationship with Olivia".

Nigel reflected on his working relationship with Ezra. While Nigel does not explicitly state the term relationship, it appeared that the relationship theme is expressed through his narration in how he responded to the student on a personal level. He wrote,

The first thing that he did was finish his English paper, and I told him what he was doing well, and what he could do to improve it. This did not take long, and then we went over the grades that he got for the last nine weeks of classes, and then we set goals for this nine weeks. He was telling me how much harder he really needed to try in order to get the grades that he wants, and I was very proud of him for it. . . [T]his was. . . the moment that I felt most connected. . .

After homework was completed, Nigel related the creative approach he took to further engage Ezra and reflected,

I remembered some of the old brain teasers that I had in my math classes, and then tried to help him expand his mind and figure them out. It really felt as though he was trying hard to figure them out and I think that he was really enjoying them.

Anne reflected on her interactions with Jabez over time. She wrote, “Jabez really started to open up to me. Last week he was really [quiet] and would barely talk to me. This week we were able to talk about more than just school work and more about his life and his friends.”

Travis reflected on the growth of the relationship with Opal. He wrote, I first helped Opal with her math homework and after that I went over it to make sure it was all correct. . . we just talked for about 20 minutes because she had to leave for basketball practice. I felt most connected when she told me that she had made the basketball team and what position she played. . . [N]ow she. . . is pretty open with me, because at the beginning of the year she was very shy.

Based on the excerpts from the White pre-service teachers’ journals, it appears

they not only recognized the importance of building relationships, they were also able to forge relationships that enhanced the teaching and learning processes with the Black/African American students. Additionally, the findings revealed that White pre-service teachers who work with the same Black/African American student over time contribute to relationship formation. Based on an analysis of the data, it appeared that the White pre-service teachers were able to recognize and articulate this in their narratives, as they describe how Black/African American students were initially shy, and subsequently “opened up” and shared more personal information.

Haberman (1995) asserts that research should focus on the relationships between teachers and students in urban settings because urban schools “have been described as places where children experience little trust and a sense of safety with the adults in the school” (as cited by Ladson-Billings & Darling-Hammond, 2000). While Foster (2001) and Ladson-Billings’ (1994) studies addressed this topic in long-term, on-site classroom observations and interviews with teachers who were successful working with Black/African American students, assessments for effective urban teachers that “directly deal with the relationships between teachers and their students. . . are assumed, but rarely documented” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 6). Foster (2001) studied Black/African American teachers and asserts that they are most effective when they

express cultural solidarity, affiliation, and connectedness with the. . . African

American community. . . reinforced by long-term residence and employment patterns. . . [and taking responsibility] for educating the whole child. . .

[exhibiting] their competence in the norms of the African American community. .

. [and] draw[ing] on the community norms in structuring their classrooms. . . in

addition to linking classroom activities to students' out of school experiences and incorporate familiar cultural and communicative patterns into their classroom practices and routines. (p. 578)

The Ladson-Billings (1994) study revealed similar results in which the participants in the study were both White (N=3) and Black/African American (N=5). Both Ladson-Billings (1994) and Foster (2000) agree that similarity in backgrounds between teachers and students does not guarantee productive relationships.

The only identifiable finding from this study concerning relationships that is congruent with the literature was Foster's (2001) reference to "long-term" residence and employment patterns that seem to support the notion that the length of time that the White pre-service teachers spent with the Black/African American students was helpful in establishing productive working relationships.

Dee also discussed relationships. On the front-end of unpacking her narrative, it must be noted that she was the White pre-service teacher from Denmark previously identified in the methodology chapter. In her eighth journal she provided a contrasting experience. She reflected,

I felt really connected when I was having a spelling contest with the boys. I like to have a relationship with the children – like we talked about in class; no significant learning will take place without building a relationship. However I don't feel that I have any kind of relationship with neither the program nor the children. . . [and am] anxious I get about going down to the church. I don't know why, however I feel misplaced! I feel very tense; from I walk in the door to I leave again.

Dee's entries are fraught with examples that illuminated her struggle to

connect with the students. A structural observation about the nature of Dee's narrative journals is that she does not refer to the children by name. She referenced the students as "the children," "they," "the boy," "one girls" and "two girls". In contrast, she referred to her tutoring colleagues by name. This could be a stylistic choice, or an expression that does not reveal connections with the students on a personal level. She also reflected on her unfamiliarity with the norms and values of education in the United States. She wrote,

In Denmark we value the progress of learning – in America you value the result of learning! . . . I think this is also one of the reason why I feel anxiety when I go to the church; it is a different environment with values and rules I'm not used to and don't know.

While Dee recognized the importance of building relationships with the students, she also seemed to recognize the cultural divide that might have prohibited her from building relationships. Additionally, she conveyed her responsibility for her own emotions (anxiety) as she tried to navigate a setting that was unfamiliar to her.

These reflections revealed that the White pre-service teachers recognized the importance of establishing relationships with the Black/African American students. Furthermore, when they engaged the Black/African American students in dialogue, as suggested by the culturally responsive approach to teaching and learning, the students became more receptive and open to learning. It is important to note that the nature of the dialogue between the White pre-service teacher and the Black/African American student was expanded beyond the specific homework tasks at hand. An analysis of the narratives revealed that conversations included listening to the students discuss their outside interests, thoughts and goals about school, along with the engaging in creative activities

that deviated from their regular homework. This finding is consistent with the literature about culturally responsive teachers who consciously work “to develop commonalities with all students. . . by draw[ing] students out . . . to share their interests, [such as] what students do outside of school and how they spend their leisure time (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 66).

Based on the findings in this study, it appeared that many of the White pre-service teachers reflected on the importance of relationships and approached their work with the Black/African American students in culturally responsive manners through the employ of creative teaching techniques, as illuminated in the previous section. Many communicated that they learned this through their experiences by noting changes in Black/African American student receptivity over the course of the semester. White pre-service teachers who employed culturally responsive creative teaching methods and engaged in dialogue with the Black/African American students beyond the scope of the homework tasks at hand seemed to establish positive symbiotic working relationships with the students.

Theme Four: Behavior and Discipline Issues

Introduction

The White pre-service teachers' journals reflected many entries relative to the behavior and discipline issues they encountered throughout the semester. A strong pattern among the White pre-service teachers was the discussion of discipline and the roles that they should play in behavior management interventions. Some grappled with an internal struggle of how best to proceed in implementing disciplinary actions. Others shared behavior management techniques they employed, while others reflected on program structure and activities, or lack thereof, as possibly causations of misbehavior. The

following excerpts illuminate the essence of the White pre-service teachers' reflections in regard to behavior and discipline. An analysis of the data resulted in identifying the following sub-themes regarding behavior and discipline issues: 1) the role of teacher; 2) behavior management interventions; 3) and White pre-service teachers' speculations about Black/African American student behavior.

Discipline - The Role of a Teacher

In Nancy's second journal she reflected on how she should deal with her frustration when students did not respond as she had hoped. She wrote,

What is the difference between the kids who hate school and those who love it? I am sure there are many factors that go into it such as relationships with teachers and other students, previous achievement, and parent involvement. Some students just don't believe in themselves. . . So what can we as teachers do to encourage them to strive for excellence? When Demetria was writing sentences today, [the Education Coordinator] encouraged her by saying, "You're much too bright to be wasting your mind on something like this." I think that was a good reminder for me that even when I am frustrated with kids, I still need to encourage them. . . I am eager to help students because I have been helped by teachers who cared enough to pay attention to my needs.

In this journal entry, Nancy expressed her recognition of the role teachers play in building relationships through encouragement to counter their frustrations.

Angel also shared her views about discipline and a teacher's role in addressing behavior issues. She wrote,

These students are not coming to the Afterschool Program to make friends; they already have friends. They are coming to get help with homework and have someone hold them accountable for the work. . . I want to be a friend, but it is more important for me to be more of someone who can guide them in the right direction without crossing the lines. In a classroom, I cannot try to be friends with my students one second, and then expect them to listen to discipline the next time.

In Nancy's sixth journal she reflected on the role of the teacher in regard to behavior management interventions. She wrote,

[M]any of the students talked down to each other so much. Olivia kept calling Jacob stupid and dumb, and everyone was kind of throwing insults at each other. It just made me wonder exactly what teachers should do in that situation. . . How much responsibility does the teacher hold in facilitating positive relationships among students?

Anne also reflected about how Black/African American students treated each other. She wrote,

I think the thing that surprises me the most about the kids is how much they talk about other kids that go to their school. . . almost always something bad. . . it [is] hard not to kind of laugh. . . because I know that is probably something I used to say about kids in my middle school. . . [I]t [was] very hard to. . . tell them that. . . they shouldn't talk about others like they do.

While these narratives reveal that the White pre-service teachers reflected on a

teacher's role in regards to behavior and discipline interventions, the following excerpts revealed how they approached issues of behavior with the Black/African American students.

Behavior Management Interventions

Angel employed a direct approach when she observed how the students were speaking to each other, She wrote,

Jokingly they would call each other stupid, but it was not a way of talking to each other that I wanted to promote at the sessions. They also used slightly more offensive words that right away I said that we do not use these types of words and to clean up their language. They actually responded to this and stopped using that language.

This was Angel's first visit to the Afterschool Program. Her behavior intervention employed the word "we" which implied that it was the standard for all persons, not just the students; she responded right away; she addressed the student's behavior, but did not seem to apply a value judgment about them, as other pre-service teachers had done; and she employed a direct communicative style that specifically stated her immediate expectations.

Delpit (1995) points out that when teachers use indirect communicative and teaching styles, Black/African American students might ignore them. For example, if Angel had been indirect and given them a lecture on inappropriate language, rather than directly confronting the behavior, they may not have been responsive. Delpit (1995) asserts that explicit directives are "likely to be more like the statements many African American children hear at home. . ." and an indirect approach may sound like it came

from someone fearful “and thus less deserving of respect” (p. 168). Delpit (1995) is also quick to point out that discussion of this issue is complex, but asserts that “many of the difficulties teachers encounter with children who are different in background from themselves are related to this underlying attitudinal difference in the appropriate display of explicitness and personal power in the classroom” (p. 168). Ladson-Billings (1994) and others are quick to point out that there is no formal recipe or prescription for functioning as a culturally responsive teaching. The point is to become aware that there might be contrasting approaches that work better with some students than others. The key is be aware and learn about the students.

Nigel reflected on a behavior management intervention and expressed his frustration when he told a couple of students that they were not seated where they were supposed to be. In his narrative he explained that they had edged their way to sit by an older male high school student who was also a member of the church and cousin to one of the young ladies. In his tenth entry, he wrote,

I said, “Hey guys we need to get at our own tables so that we can get some work done.” Olivia [replied] “Well, take [Junior] and get some stuff done.” I did not appreciate this, but I don’t really know how to deal with her. She is a really mouthy girl and thinks that the rules do not apply to her. . . I wish that she would have some kind of change in her behavior.

Nigel used an indirect approach and did not directly confront the students and explicitly ask them to move. He then referred to Olivia as “mouthy”. He did not mention any follow up attempt to request that the students move.

Nancy responded to Olivia in a different manner. In describing her encounter with Olivia in her seventh journal she wrote,

. . . I wanted to work with Olivia. I asked her if I could, and she jokingly said, "GIRL. I don't wanna be workin' with you." We laughed and then sat down together to review her tracking sheet from the day. . . We shared band-aid shaped gum, stories about the bomb threats at her school, and then a W.W.J.D lanyard. She pulled the lanyard out of her purse and handed it to me. I looked and it, then preceded to give it back. . . She wanted me to keep it because she had seen that I had a W.W.J.D bracelet on. The fact that she noticed something and remembered something about me meant a lot. Sometimes teachers probably feel like all they do is give. The truth is though, we really do receive when we give. It's just that simple.

Nancy did not react in an adverse manner to Olivia's response, or shy away. She proceeded to connect with her on a personal level. It appeared that Nancy's approach with Olivia was more sensitive to the student as a whole person, rather than viewing her as a student who was required to complete a homework assignment.

Dee shared a similar non-aggressive reactive approach in her seventh journal she wrote,

At one point, the two boys had a hard time focusing on their homework, but I decided not to correct them or tell them to stop laughing, because I felt that, that would make matters worse. I think I had some effect, that I didn't get mad or reacted the way they wanted me to, so there were no reason to continue this behavior!

Dee did not seem to react to the behavior with punishment in mind, and revealed that positive results that occurred when she honored the students' laughter, backed off and avoided a confrontation. Her approach seemed to work because, subsequently the boys completed their tracking sheets and proceeded to work on their homework. This incident occurred within the first fifteen minutes of the program shortly after the students arrived. It was a transitional period for them to eat a snack and complete the tracking sheet. Dee appeared to honor their transitional time.

However, in another situation, Jane reported on how Dee attempted to correct a student's behavior in the following manner. She wrote,

Olivia started calling Jacob retarded and laughed about it. Dee told her to stop and Olivia told her you can't tell me what to do. "I do my thing you do yours." Dee was like no you listen to me, I don't listen to you.

According to Jane's report, this exchange went from a behavior management intervention with an attempt to curb Olivia's behavior, to an argument between a student and the White pre-service teacher about who was supposed to listen to whom.

Other White pre-service teachers made blanket statements about the students as a whole and referred to them as "mouthy", "disrespectful", and "wild". Jane reflected about a quiet day in contrast to the previous week. She wrote, "It was the quietest day I can ever remember. . . I was like what happened to all those loud mouthed kids we had?"

A few weeks after Nigel's reflection about his frustration in confronting the two girls who did not move from their seats positioned by the older high school male, he again, reflected on how he would circumvent behavior problems by splitting students up who talk a lot, or exerting "power of position" by seating the students in closer proximity

to himself. In his fourth journal reflected, “. . . by determining who talks to whom the most and then I can try to split up the ones that talk a lot or just put them close to me.”

Nigel expressed an intervention designed to manage student behavior by splitting students up. He did not seem to recognize the possibility of introducing a teaching technique that might evoke student conversation and dialogue to promote educative social interactions among the students.

Jane shared a similar perspective, reflected on Kolby's behavior, and stated that she “would try to keep [him] more focused. . . [as] [h]e had a tendency (sic) to listen into other people's conversations and then join them when he was supposed to be working.” Jane does not offer how she might go about helping Kolby focus on his work to curtail conversation, nor does she recognize that inter-student conversation might be used as a tool to engage the student in his studies. She positions conversation as an either/or activity in which she might assume that the student cannot be conversant and also focus on work. This is counter to the culture of the Black/African American community in which conversation is heralded as an appropriate means of learning and interaction.

King's (2004) article *Historical and Sociocultural Influences on African American Education* highlights the relationship between Black/African American cultural norms and effective learning and teaching. She cites several studies that reveal that Black/African American students appear to achieve at higher levels and also prefer cooperative learning environments which allow for and encourage verbal exchanges in the completion of the tasks. King (2004) also points out the cultural significance of dialogue within the Black/African American community, and the many ways that this cultural strength might be used in the teaching and learning process.

Critical Race Theory would confront the issue of the dominant White culture's normative standard for behavior and point out that the Black/African American culture might re-define the normative standard. King (2004) asserts that "the mismatches between styles of learning exhibited by African American students and the behavioral expectations and pedagogical styles of the schools result in low levels of achievement in African Americans" (p. 478). Critical Race Theory challenges the system that determines what is and is not appropriate, and also challenges a system that punishes those who deviate from the normative expectations.

Nigel later, in his eight journal, seemed to shift his tolerance level for and perception of the Black/African American students' conversations within the learning environment. He wrote,

It got a little loud in the room today, because it was such an easy going day and the kids did not have homework for the most part. It seemed as though we were all on the same level, and not teacher/student, but student/student. It really made a good environment for learning because we were not being strict, but we were not too easy going. This really gives me a good idea to use in the classroom, because when student[s] are having fun they learn more.

From this narrative, Nigel appeared to have constructed new knowledge based on his experience at the Afterschool Program. In previous reflections, the tenor of his position on behavior management was more authoritative and confrontational. Here, it seems that he found a balance between being too strict and too easy going. He stated that this new knowledge will be useful in his future classroom.

The White pre-service teachers journals reported a wide array of behavior interventions. Some appeared to more successful than others in “managing” the behavior of the Black/African American students’ behaviors. While this section focused mostly on the employ of the range of specific techniques, the next section reveals the findings on White pre-service teachers’ speculations about student behavior.

Speculations about Behavior

When the Black/African American students did not have much homework, such as during the week of ISTEP testing or before a holiday break, the White pre-service teachers expressed a gamut of perspectives about student behavior. Some seemed to speculate on why the students were misbehaving; some seemed baffled; others were able to circumvent behavior issues by keeping the students engaged in activities; and several expressed a recognition of their roles in setting the tone in the teaching and learning process by taking responsibility for their actions.

While some White pre-service teachers noted behavior problems during ISTEP week, one expressed a different perspective and experience. Nancy reflected on the climate of the tutoring session during ISTEP week when the students had no homework. She wrote,

Although it was a slow day, it was a good day. It was a nice reminder that even if the students aren't doing tedious homework, they can still come together as a community of learners. Because this is ISTEP week, we had a laidback tutoring session. The kids had their snack and then everyone got together and asked one another trivia questions. It's actually fun to do trivia questions with the kids

because there is always something for us to learn as well. The kids were generally excited about it.

Nancy also recognized that this situation “was a nice reminder that even if the students aren't doing tedious homework, they can still come together as a community of learners.” In this reflection, Nancy made a very important cultural observation, as King (2004) notes that “the African experience is. . . a shared orientation. . . based on similar cultural. . . experiences that include the centrality of community” (p. 472).

Some pre-service teachers reflected on why students were misbehaving. While they were not happy with the behavior, they offered possible explanations. Anne reflected,

Today the kids at the church were wild. . . loud not doing anything they were being told to do. . . After snack time only a few of the kids actually had homework. The ones that didn't have any homework were the ones that were being super loud and disrespectful. . . I don't know why. . . I'm not sure if it's because we were not in the usual building we normally are or if they had a crazy day at school.

Nigel's second journal reports,

. . . I felt like the kids were trying to get away with a little bit more. They [did] not [want]. . . to do what has been prepared for them, but that might have been[due to] the fact that [they were] going outside to play a game after they were done. . . the kids did not have any homework, because of the upcoming ISTEP testing this week. . . I. . . noticed that the kids were not working as diligently as they did last week.

While the White pre-service teachers tried to offer explanations for the misbehavior, few of them speculated on the connection between the lack of homework and “misbehavior”. Later Nigel appeared to grow in this area. In a subsequent journal, Nigel reflected on how diligently the students worked and connected it to the tutors’ abilities to keep students busy. He wrote, “The kids all worked until the very end of the tutoring time. . . It was a very god (sic) job on the tutors’ parts to be able to keep their student involved for that long of a time. . . Having the whole classroom involved is a good quality of a teacher”. It appeared that he was beginning to make connections between the importance of keeping students engaged. According to the reflective journals, lack of engagement tended to directly influence “misbehavior”. He implied that it was the teacher’s responsibility to keep students busy.

Kale echoed this sentiment. In his eighth journal he reflected on a method to keep the students engaged by stating “I would have liked to play the game with just one person and get more students involved. . . I know [how important it is to] get more children involved. . . so that it doesn’t lose the attention of anyone.”

Several other White pre-service teachers remarked about their roles in setting the tone in the learning environment. Anne stated that, “What I put into this program is what they will get out of it in return.” Others mentioned the importance of monitoring their own attitudes and “not bringing their outside “stress” with them to the tutoring sessions. One noted the importance of “being flexible” and “having something ready for them to do”. Some made mention of the days when they weren’t feeling well, they didn’t have the best experience for themselves or the students.

Based on an analysis of the data, it appeared that the White pre-service teachers learned that they were responsible for setting the tone, and that the Black/African American students would respond to accordingly to the learning environment that was constructed for them by the adults in charge. From an interpretation of the findings, it can be concluded that over time, the White pre-service teachers constructed new knowledge based on their experiences as tutors at the Afterschool Program, as they appeared to make the connection between their attitudes and actions, and the responsiveness of the students.

Dee offered a perspective that addressed the nature of the Afterschool Program structure itself in relation to schooling as a social structure, and, then related both to student behavior. She wrote,

[T]he children were very loud today and they were told to be quiet (sic) many times. I[t] made me think; when did the children get out of school? If they first get out of school around three after having spend (sic) the whole day sitting on a chair being [quiet] and doing homework, I can understand why they have difficulties [concentrating] again for two [h]ours being trapped to a chair, being [quiet] and doing homework. In Denmark we have afterschool programs; however the children can decide what they want to do, after they finish their homework. I[t] made me think of the reason why the afterschool programs are different in our countries; I think it has something to do with, what the countries values are! In Denmark we value the progress of learning – in America you value the result of learning! Of cause (sic) the children should be able to sit quietly down on their chairs and receive a message, but for how long? I know how difficult it is for me,

so I can only imagine it must be more difficult for them!. . . I [should not] expect more from a child that (sic) I would from my self!

Dee's reflection parallel's a Critical Race Theory approach, in that she challenges the system and the structure of the program. Her assessment shifts from blaming the students for misbehavior in a structure that is not responsive to their needs, and critiques the program itself. Dee also confronted the nature and purpose of education in the United States as a result oriented approach, in contrast to an educational paradigm that values the learning process.

In a later entry, Dee reported that the program "needed more structure". This sentiment was echoed by another White pre-service teacher with whom she worked on Thursdays. In Jane's tenth journal, she shared her overall assessment of the program and her perspective about discipline and interacting with the students. She stated,

Those kids run that program. There might as well not even be someone in charge. . . I dread going because every week is so bad. If next week were not my last week I do not think I could take it. . . I would wind up blowing up on those kids. [The Education Coordinator] can't play Ms. Nice Guy/Friend and be a disciplinarian. You have to be consistently one or the other, and in the role as a leader you have to go the route that might get you hated and be the disciplinarian because otherwise the kids will walk all over you.

While some White pre-service teachers recognized alternative perspectives about misbehavior when they reflected from the student's perspective, others seemed frustrated and at a loss as to why the Black/African American students were misbehaving. Some were able to employ preventive behavior management interventions by keeping

students engaged through creative activities, while some used direct interventions that seemed to respectfully confront the misbehavior. A few expressed the recognition of their roles and responsibility in behavior management and discipline because they felt that teachers set the tone in the teaching and learning process, while others seemed to project outward and blame the students. It appeared that the White pre-service teachers who functioned from a culturally sensitive approach that honored student voice, seemed to be the most successful in turning misbehavior into an educative experience and expressed less frustration with the students.

Theme Five: Race

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a strategy that assists in “unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations” (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 213). One of the major tenets of CRT asserts that racism is “normal” and so deeply imbedded in the fabric of our society that it looks “ordinary and normal to persons in the culture” (Delgado, & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi). Furthermore, CRT scholars assert that one of the ways that racism is transmitted in a culture is through dialogue, the narrative, both written and oral. Thus, in keeping with the CRT strategy, this portion analyzed the narratives written by the White pre-service teachers using a Critical Race Theory framework.

Only three of the nine White pre-service teachers explicitly mentioned or discussed race as an issue in their experiences as tutors in the Afterschool Program, in addition to the one participant who used the word “diversity” to discuss the “differences” between the students and her. This pattern of non-reflection or refusal to talk about race and its impact on interactions with Black/African American students was a theme, and was interpreted from the perspective that “evidence of absence is not absence of

evidence” (R. Merriweather as reported by L. Merriweather-Hunn, personal communication, 2008). According to Bogdan & Biklen (2007), qualitative research provides the researcher with the option of using narrative codes to analyze the nature and structure of narratives. They state that structures such as omissions and contradictions “sometimes convey something about beliefs” (p. 178). In this case, non-reflection on race is a glaring omission, particularly for students enrolled in a multicultural education course designed expressly to provide “pre-service teachers the opportunity to better understand the impact of race and class on educational attainment and to appreciate the strengths and resources of inner-city residents” (“Midwestern University: College of Education,” 2007). The remainder of the section presents findings that revealed how White pre-service teachers employed a “color-blind” approach to working with Black/African American students; interpretations of journal narratives that did discuss race; and how the White pre-service teachers expressed their understanding of race via their reflections on a movie shown at the Afterschool Program.

Color-blind

CRT scholars would assert that this omission indicated a color-blind approach to interacting with Black/African American students. Teachers who state they are color-blind indicate that they treat all students the same way, regardless of the color of their skin (Sleeter, 1995). Thus, they infer, that they do not see color; therefore it is not on the table for discussion. While most of the White pre-service teachers did not explicitly reflect on the fact that the student with whom they were working were Black/African American, others shared their thoughts and feelings. Those individual reflections and interpretations are presented in the following sub-sections.

Nancy

One White pre-service teacher wrote about race extensively in several consecutive journals as she reflected on her internal struggle about race and racism. Due to the nature of her expressions of struggle and growth, her narratives will be examined in the following section. In Nancy's first reflection about race, she wrote

For the first time in my life, I am a minority. It has really given me the opportunity to see how some of what my African American friends have gone through during their lives. I have always felt like there is a miscommunication between African Americans and European Americans. I tend to be overly cautious of what I say and do in front of African Americans. I just don't want to offend anyone even if it's an accident. But at the same time, it is exhausting to try so hard to prove to people that I am not a racist. Sometimes I just want to tell myself to chill out. I have never interacted with African Americans for a common goal. Tutoring has become challenging and rewarding at the same time.

Nancy seemed to assume that she can fully empathize with the Black/African American experience because she is a minority at the Afterschool Program. From this statement, it appeared that she might not understand what it means to be a minority as it relates to power. She seemed to surmise that racism is restricted to a discussion about pigmentation. Critical Race Scholars contend that race is a social construction based on power and privilege, as pigmentation has "property rights" that have real currency in relation to access to material resources (Gotanda, 1995). In McIntyre's (1997) work with White pre-service teachers, she tried to help them critically explore the effects of Whiteness as it relates to power; however, they were unable to grasp the concept of

White privilege on an individual level, or White racism at the societal or institutional levels.

Nancy reflected about “miscommunication between African Americans and European Americans”, but does not expand on the nature of the miscommunication. Nancy stated that it was “exhausting to try so hard to prove she is not a racist”. Could this be similar to what Black/African Americans refer to as the emotional and psychological effort it takes to live in a state of double consciousness? (DuBois, 1903/2003). Nancy, does not seem to be able to “turn the tables” and speculate about what it might feel like being on the other side of that table.

Nancy stated that she is “not a racist.” This seems consistent with the literature about the preparation of White pre-service teachers, particularly, in studies that used looked at “Whiteness” designed to assist White pre-service teachers in the exploration of their own biases (Marx, McIntyre, 1997, & Pennington, 2007). According to Marx (2004), “Even thinking about Whiteness takes a deliberate conscious effort that most White Americans simply never attempt” (p. 32). So, while Nancy grappled with the issue of race, it seemed that she recognized its impact on some level, but did not communicate how it may impact her own biases.

Nancy reflected on race again in her fourth journal entry. She expressed that she still felt uncomfortable. “I still feel really out of place at tutoring. Usually after a month of being with the same people, I warm up to them. I dread going to tutoring and wish I could avoid the situation altogether.” Nancy, then, referred to her multicultural education course work in an attempt to make sense of her internal dilemma. She mentioned that her class discussed “this being part of stage one with anxiety.” She related how difficult it is

to stay positive and how her initial excitement about the program has waned. “I was so excited about this program and working with the kids. Now, every time I go I just feel like I am doing everything wrong.”

Nancy then, grappled with trying to identify the impetus of her discomfort. She deflects personal responsibility and reasons that her discomfort is a result of the lack of training prior to her dispatch as a tutor. She wrote, “Part of it may be because we did not receive very much training before tutoring started.” Then she reflected on the nature of the Afterschool Program itself and states, “I didn't know what to expect so I set expectations that were different than what the leaders intended. There is a lack of communication in the program that is frustrating from all sides of the issue.” It appeared that she is deflecting her discomfort on the program operation. Marx (2004), also found similar reactions among her White pre-service teachers engaged in a similar experience and reported that when Whites are called to shine the light on themselves in terms of culpability and complicity, taking personal responsibility, suddenly, the problem doesn't exist “out there,” it situates the White pre-service teacher in a position of opportunity to either learn about the privilege of pigmentation, deny it, or process it in a manner that deflects responsibility.

McIntyre (1997) coined the term “White talk” in her work with White pre-service teachers that highlighted their patterns of discourse of avoidance that served to keep them from examining their individual and collective roles in the perpetuation of racism. Hytten & Warren (2003) also recognized similar results citing 12 different discourse patterns that students used to “protect and secure Whiteness's dominant position,” one of which was deflecting responsibility (p. 65).

Nancy continued reflecting on her internal struggle in her statement, “Even when I go with a positive attitude, I always leave upset. I feel (sic) defeated before I even say anything. I am not sure how to handle the situation, and again, I find myself wanting to avoid it altogether.” From this journal entry, it appeared that Nancy is grappling with her internal struggle and discomfort with the tutoring experience. Her focus seemed very internal and directed toward herself, then she shifted her perspective and posed the question “ Why am I allowing myself to focus on myself when the key issue here is for the students to be learning?” She seemed to begin to take responsibility for her own discomfort. She looked to the future in anticipation and stated,

I can only hope that I will truly learn from my past two experiences and that I will arrive at tutoring next week knowing that my time is limited. I know the program is a good idea and the motives are great. I love the idea of helping students with homework and teaching them good study habits. My goal for next week is to focus on the good of the program and not the bad.

In Nancy’s next journal entry she continued to ponder her internal struggle and discomfort. She wrote,

I guess the main thing I am wondering at this point is how do I overcome this discouraged attitude about tutoring? What is it that really bothers me? I used to think it was the difference in race and the way we approach things in that regard. Now, I feel like I have become more comfortable in that area. I have decided that maybe it would be better to just be myself and if I offend someone, deal with it when it happens. I am not perfect and I will never be able to do and say the right

thing in situations where I am the minority. Perhaps it's time to just accept that truth. It is exhausting to try to act the way I think others want me to.

Nancy continued to work on her attitude and expressed, "I am still looking forward to tutoring even though it has been challenging. I am probably growing more than I know and one day it will be exciting to see that growth." She still seems focused on herself, and had only referenced the Black/African American student with whom she is working one time.

In Nancy's next entry in the ninth week of the experience, she seemed to shift her perspective again and take more responsibility for her own internal struggle. She referred to her formative years in high school and seems to begin to recognize the marginalization of Black/African Americans, but indicated that she is beginning to shed her discomfort.

I have learned that I CAN work with students who are different from me. In a high school of almost 2,000, there were five African American students. Imagine the probability of having a class with one of them. The percentage is almost invisible. I was lucky enough to have a best friend who was African American and who taught me a lot about diversity. I obviously knew so much about dealing with other cultures, right? Wrong. I was and am more clueless than I thought.

Keisha, my African American friend was just that...my friend. We had equal status with one another. With tutoring, that wasn't the case. There was a mentor-student relationship where the mentor has slightly more power. It's a whole new world.

While she indicated that she recognized a power differential between student and tutor in the Afterschool Program, she did not seem to recognize the power differential between

herself and her Black/African American best friend. She stated that they were of “equal status”. In doing so, she indicated that she did not recognize the benefits of her privileged pigmentation, the knapsack of White privilege (McIntosh, 1989).

Nancy further reflected,

I truly believe that even someone with limited experience can work together with peers who are different than him or her. The key is to accept that there is a difference. The moment I stopped pretending everything was normal was the moment I was able let down my guard and be the person I really am. The last thing minority students need is one more person in their life hiding behind a mask of discomfort.

In this reflection, Nancy began to point out that her discomfort about race might impact the students with whom she is interacting. While she did not mention how it might affect teaching and learning, she did indicate that the Black/African American students might be able to sense her discomfort. Over time, it appeared that Nancy’s internal struggle ran the gamut from complete discomfort and an internal struggle, to a realization that her discomfort might impede her ability to be effective in teaching/tutoring Black/African students. While she closed the semester with a more relaxed posture about race, she did not seem to make the connection between race and power, or lack thereof.

Nancy’s narratives provides an example of how she constructed new knowledge about race within the constructivist paradigm. Nancy constructed new knowledge by referring to the knowledge that she brought to the experience, such as her perspectives about race during her high school years. She factored in new knowledge from her multicultural education course and interfaced it with her experience at the Afterschool

Program. She identified the complexity of her experience through her narratives and the internal struggles on which she reflected.

Based on the data, Nancy engaged in an experiential activity that factored in previous knowledge, as well as new information; indicated her recognition of growth from the experience; and reflected on the continuum of the learning process throughout the duration of the twelve-week period (Windschitl, 2000). Nancy concluded with a revelation that indicated her increased comfortability about working with Black/African American students, indicating growth and receptivity to additional learning experiences.

A Critical Race Theory lens would identify Nancy's reflections as devoid of attention to racism as a system of oppression. While Nancy did appear to take ownership for her subjectivities about race on an individual level, she did not indicate an awareness of racism on a structural level.

Angel

Angel did not explicitly discuss race, she did however, use the terms diversity and culture in making comparisons between the students and herself. She brought this up in her sixth journal entry via a reference to a book one of the students was reading. She applied the context and issues in the book to express how it helped her better "understand" the student, Olivia. She noted that this helped her "feel connected" to Olivia. She wrote,

I think that I learned a lot by reading a few chapters in this book about the culture that these kids live in. The book itself talked about a diverse group of kids that hang out together and have a lot of personal issues they are dealing with. When I was a middle schooler, I do not think that we would have read anything like this

book because I did not live in a diverse area, and I did not have these kind of problems close to home. However, these students do have this kind of thing going on in their lives. I really felt myself starting to understand more of the differences that we have, and I think that I am gaining a better understanding of who Olivia is and where she comes from.

In Angel's interpretation of Olivia's book, she reflected on its content, then transferred her interpretation onto the Black/African American students as a group and referred to the "culture that these kids live in." She assumed that Olivia's life paralleled the book content that included "problems" and "personal issues" making the mental leap that Olivia would also have problems. This assumption was a deficit model construction. Angel also seemed to separate herself from Olivia's school experience, stating that "we" would not have read "anything like this book". So, Angel not only distanced herself personally, she also made a reference to a "collective".

It seemed presumptuous for Angel to assert that Olivia's life and culture was reflected in the book, particularly since she did not indicate that there was any dialogue about the content of the book in relation to the student's life. Later, Angel later contradicted herself and did not seem to realize that she had made an interpretation that transferred stereotypical assumptions onto the Black/African American students. She stated,

[I will] not drawing conclusions about these student's lives. I do not know much about a diverse culture, and I keep learning more and more every week. . . I want to keep an open mind to everything, and I want to be able to understand different learning styles of the students.

In essence, Angel made an assumption about Olivia based on the book content, then stated she would not jump to conclusions about the students after she already had done so.

Angel was proactive by reading Olivia's book and familiarizing herself with a book that Olivia had chosen. It seemed that she exhibited an interest in the student and took actions to learn more about the student's interest in literature. This is congruent with the actions of a culturally sensitive teacher who takes the initiative to learn more about their students. However, a culturally sensitive teacher might have engaged Olivia in dialogue without jumping to a stereotypical conclusion. So, while Angel referenced "diversity" and "difference," it seemed that her position and interpretation did not include recognition of race and the stereotypical leap she made in reference to Olivia.

Angel expressed an interest in "understanding different learning styles;" however, she does not connect it to culture or offer any specifics regarding how to acquire that information. It is difficult to discern how Angel constructed knowledge about how race impacts teaching and learning, other than there might be something "different" about it. She did not discuss diversity or race again.

Critical Race Theory would question Angel's avoidance of an explicit discussion about race, and that using the term diversity did not fully address the power differential between Whites and Black/African Americans. According to Ladson-Billings's (1999), review of the literature on teacher education programs designed to teaching for "diversity", she asserts that while some of the programs had some of strengths in their approaches to assist pre-service teachers, most did not explicitly position race and racism at the forefront of many of those discussions. She further stated that

[K]nowing what the literature says about preparing teachers for diverse student populations is unlikely to be of much use to teacher educators. What we need to know is the meaning that these teacher preparation programs make of difference, diversity, and social justice (p. 241).

Ladson-Billings' (1999) assertions are based on the premise that "teaching for diversity" without attention to race results in "superficial, essentialized treatments of various cultural groups" based on a Euro-centric construct that fails to examine "generic models" of traditional approaches to education (p. 241). Thus, the issues of social justice, inequity, and power as it relates to race within the social structure of school are rarely addressed.

Anne

Anne was the only pre-service teacher who explicitly mentioned race after the first tutoring session. Anne mentions feeling proud

. . . that the kids trust me and are willing to give me a chance to be able to help them with their homework. I think it takes a lot of courage and acceptance to be able to let a college student help you, especially (sic) one of a different race than you. I thought they might not want us to help them because we are all white college students. I was truly wrong when we actually got there and they wanted us to help them.

Since her assumption that the Black/African American students might reject her because she was White had been dispelled, it appeared that Anne began her tutoring experience on a positive note and seemed to feel welcomed by the Black/African American students. Over the course of the next eleven weeks, Anne never wrote about

race again. This omission is consistent with the narrative structures of most of the other White pre-service teachers, and reports from Ladson-Billings (1999) & Sleeter's (1993) work with White teachers. Critical Race Theorists would contend that while her single reflection on race indicated her awareness and ability to state that she was in a Black/African American setting, she omitted discussions of power related to race, or references to how race might impact her teaching.

Jane

Jane reflected on race after her seventh tutoring session. She began to reflect on how students responded to her differently than the Black/African American tutors. It appeared that she felt rejected and disrespected because of her Whiteness. (Manning Peyton is a pseudonym for a Black/African American tutor.) She wrote,

Some days I am overwhelmingly aware of the fact that I am one of the only white people at the church. Usually I only notice this because of the way the kids act. For example today, when Manning showed up Ruby called him Peyton Manning. Then Junior yelled, "No he ain't, he ain't white." Then Junior looked at me and said, "No offense." It just kind of took me by surprise because I don't normally think about race much at all. Also sometimes it seems like the kids listen to Miss Kamille and Manning more. Even to the point that they respect them more. It might just be me, but I get that feeling a lot. Sometimes I tell the kids to do something and they don't do it and then Miss Kamille says something and they do it finally. I don't know if it is because they know her better, or if I just don't have any authority with them for one reason or another.

First of all, Jane claimed that she does not "think about race much at all".

This was an indication that she viewed herself as being color-blind (Gotanda, 1995). She then asserted that the students responded better to the tutors who were Black/African American. This contradiction illustrated that she, in fact, did recognize that race plays a role in interacting with Black/African American students.

If Jane was truly color-blind, she might have attributed the students' compliance and "respect" to other factors than race. She might have reflected on how the other tutors approached and interacted with the students differently than she did. She could have reflected on how she, herself, delivered directives to the students. She might also have reasoned that Manning was a basketball star at Midwestern University and might have "star power", or that Miss Kamille attended the same church as the students and may have a community connection. There are many other assumptions that Jane could have made regarding how the students acted and why they acted that way. However, she chose to base her assumption on race, and then contradicted herself by stating that she "doesn't think about race at all".

Jane's reflection that raised the issue of "authority" is discussed by Delpit (1995). Delpit (1995) asserts that authority must be earned. She further states,

The authoritative teacher can control the class through an exhibition of person power; establishes meaningful interpersonal relationships that garner student respect; exhibits a strong belief that all students can learn; establishes a standard of achievement and "pushes" the student to achieve that standard; and holds the attention of the students by incorporating interactional features of black communication style in his or her teaching. (p. 36)

So, while Jane's reference to authority may have some merit, it appeared that

other culturally responsive components must be incorporated in working with Black/African American students to facilitate responsiveness, and therefore, learning.

Jane continued with the narrative and reflected on relationships. While relationships are discussed in another stand-alone section, it warranted discussion here as it relates to race because the following excerpt was situated directly following her reference to race, and her perception of how the students respond to her at the Afterschool Program.

Honestly I don't feel like any of them there really respect me. Sometimes I just feel like they tolerate my presence. It could also be that I always work with someone different every week usually so I never really get the chance to build a relationship with one person and earn that person's respect.

In this narrative, Jane seemed to recognize the importance of developing personal relationships. She asserted that she had not worked with the same student over a period of time in order to establish bonds. However, her journals indicate that she had worked with Junior five times, and Ezekiel four times, in addition to interacting with them during enrichment activities.

The following excerpts were from Jane's journal illustrating how she had previously interacted with Junior and the assumptions she made based on those interactions.

He (Junior) pulled out three chapters worth of work and claimed that the teacher had given that to them all that day because the teacher was in a bad mood. I guess he was trying to pull a fast one on me, but it was plain to me that he just had not been doing his work all year.

It appeared that Jane did not seem to believe Junior's claim about the amount of homework he had been given and insinuates that Junior had been consistently negligent about doing his work. Jane further wrote about her perception of Junior's academic ability.

Junior did not understand any of his math. He just kind of went through and made stuff up. I tried to explain. . . it would take three or four times to have it actually penetrate. Even then sometimes I felt like he did not really understand, he was just trying to get me off his case. Also he had a habit of when I tried to remind him to put units on his answers to say, "Why you cheating me?" It was kind of funny at first because I figured he was joking around. However after about the thirtieth time, it started to really bother me.

Jane assumed that Junior was trying to deceive her. Jane might be exaggerating in her statement that claimed "after about the thirtieth time" which helped me wonder if "three or four times to have [math] actually penetrate" might also be an exaggeration. She assumed that the student "was trying to get her off his case" and did not appear to see the humor Junior might have been trying to express with his "You trying to cheat me?" comment. It seemed like this might have been a missed opportunity to build a relationship with a student and earn the respect she felt she was not getting from the students.

Jane further expressed her frustration with Junior and stated "It made me feel like he expected me to spoon feed him every answer." She then, contradicted herself when she revealed that after explaining how to compute "area, perimeter, and scale models" he did "most of them without any assistance from me". Her final assessment of Junior is "I

can tell he is a decent kid, but he does not seem to have the best learning skills.” All of Jane’s comments and assessments are based on her first one hour interaction with Junior, as he was new to the program. It was his first day.

The narrations of her interactions with Junior are not congruent with Delpit’s (1995) assertions about how a teacher establishes respect of Black/African American students.

A contrasting impression from another White pre-service teacher regarding working with Junior was expressed by Anne, who wrote, “I have never met Junior before today and he was totally comfortable around me and was having a good time. . . is a very nice kid who I enjoyed working with. He seemed to want to have fun even though he was doing his homework.” After working with Junior for “the past few weeks,” she further reported that “He is such a great kid. He works hard to get his homework done even when he really doesn’t understand what he has to do. We were working on multiplying and dividing decimals for his homework.”

Anne and Jane report completely different first experiences with Junior. While Anne seemed to be building a good working relationship with the student, Jane stated she was “bothered” and frustrated by Junior’s responses to her. In contrast, it appeared that Anne’s attitudinal response was supportive, encouraging and resulted in a productive student/tutor working relationship.

Jane asserted that the reason that the students acted differently toward her might be because she was White or has no “authority”. She did not reflect on her own behavior in comparison to how other White pre-service teacher/tutors interact with the students in assisting them with their homework. She made the assumption that the Black/African

American students responded differently to her because of race, rather than reflect on a myriad of other possibilities.

An interesting anecdote regarding Jane's perception might be unearthed in her first journal entry that in which she has "a feeling that this is going to be a really fun experience. . . It feels good to actually tell someone how to do something and have them understand it." Her expression "actually tell someone how to do something" resonates with the "banking method of teaching" that does not honor student voice or view education as a symbiotic collaborative exchange between the teacher and student (Freire, 1974).

Movie: Akeelah and the Bee

The issue of race surfaced in reflections the day a movie that was shown at the Afterschool Program. The movie was *Akeelah and the Bee*. It's about an eleven-year old Black/African American girl's academic journey and school experience en-route to a national spelling bee competition. While the White pre-service teachers did not explicitly make references to race, it is important to review their narratives in response to the movie as it related to the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program. Each White pre-service teacher who referenced the movie appeared to process the experience differently. Dee wrote,

After all the children had finished their homework, we saw a movie. I think that [it was] the best experience I had this week; to see how much empty [empathy] the children of all ages, had with the characters in the movie. Even though one of the tutors wanted to let them of [out] 5 min. earlier, they wanted to stay and watch the movie.

Dee's narrative revealed that she paid attention to the students. She not only watched the movie, she watched the children watch the movie. From her observations, it seemed that she noticed how the students related to and empathized with the Black/African American children portrayed in the movie. Dee ranked it as "the best" part of the week.

Jane offered a contrasting expression. She "felt the most disconnected from the children" when they watched the movie. Jane's feeling of disconnection seemed to reveal that she was more focused on herself than the children. She did mention she was surprised at how "good the movie was" and how much the "kids got into it"; however, she does not reflect on why the students in the Afterschool Program might have felt connected to the movie or its characters. It appeared as though she might have missed an opportunity to make an observation about cultural connections between the Black/African American students and the characters portrayed in the movie, as noted by Dee.

Only two White pre-service teachers were present to attend the viewing of *Ahkeelah and the Bee*. While both reflected on it in their journals, they each processed and constructed their own learning experiences from it differently. Critical Race scholars, Yosso & Soloranzo (2001), recognize the value of film media as a method to engage White pre-service teachers in "discussions" about race by focusing on how Black/African American students are characterized and portrayed (p. 7). They further suggest that content analysis, including attention to story lines and scripts also provide options for exploration about how Black/African people are represented. They suggest conducting a comparative analysis between films like *Dangerous Minds* and *Lean on Me*, combined with the development of counter stories, in order to provide alternative perspectives and

highlight how Black/African American students are represented in a media dominated by the White influences.

A comparative analysis between the two White pre-service teachers' journals revealed a schism in interpretations about the importance and value of the movie to them as educators and their divergent abilities to connect the movie to the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program. Based on analysis of the data provided by the two White pre-service teachers who did attend the movie, it can be concluded that film might be a productive inroad to a discussion about race, particularly if the pre-service teachers were encouraged to share their experiences with each other in a dialogue.

Summary

An analysis of all the White pre-service teachers' journals revealed that there was little reflection explicitly about race. From this omission it can be concluded that the White pre-service teachers took a color-blind approach to working with the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program. The few narratives that did discuss race, also revealed a color-blind approach. When racial differences were discussed, the reflection put the onus of responsibility on the Black/African American students, as in the case of the White pre-service teacher who felt that she was being disrespected due to her Whiteness.

The findings on race revealed that the White pre-service teachers seemed to reflect on their positionalities and feelings, with little introspection and reflection about the Black/African American students themselves. While one student, Angel, appeared to "learn about the culture" of the Black/African American students via a book one of the

students was reading, it appeared that no dialogue was exchanged in order to obtain information as to whether or not the essence of the book was a true representation of the culture of the Black/African American students. Nancy spent most of her discussions focused on her internal struggle, while Jane felt she was being disrespected due to her Whiteness.

Of course, the purpose of the journal is certainly to assist White pre-service teachers in critical self-reflection. However, reflection need not stop with the self, as noted by Dewey (1938); Zeichner & Liston (1987); Zeichner (1996); & Gay (2000). Reflection and learning experiences from those reflections do not occur in a vacuum impervious of the impact of the social context in which learning occurs. White pre-service teachers have the opportunity to reflect on themselves in addition to the context of the Afterschool Program. They can be introspective, but, also reflect on how they position themselves, navigate, interpret, and make meaning of the context of the learning environment. Expanded reflections can help them understand how they see themselves in the role of teacher; learn about their worldviews in relation to Black/African American students; and construct new knowledge about themselves and the students as they prepare to enter the teaching.

According to Critical Race Scholars, discussions about race and racism should center on elements of power. While the White pre-service teachers reflected on race at the individual level, they did not discuss race at the societal level. They did not reflect on how the system of rules, procedures, and culturally sanctioned beliefs maintain control and influence how racist ideologies are manifested. Soloranzo (1997) employs a Critical Race Theory framework in his description of four dimensions that can be used to guide

us in illuminating how racist ideologies are manifested in teacher education, such as macro and micro components; individual and institutional levels; both the conscious and unconscious levels; and the influence of those manifestations on both the individual and group. The “truths” about race that thrive in all four dimensions are foundational for the construction “majoritarian story,” also referred to as the “master narrative”, which are presented in the following section.

Theme Six: Supporting or Challenging the Master Narrative

Introduction

The master narrative implies that the educational system is objective, meritocratic, color-blind, race neutral, and affords everyone an equal opportunity (Calmore, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Soloronzo, 1997). The master narrative is transmitted by the descriptions of events told by members of the dominant culture, accompanied by the values and beliefs that justify the actions taken (Love, 2003). In order to unearth the portions of text that conveyed messages that supported the master narrative, an analytical approach offered by Bogdon & Biklen (2007) is used to develop a category that included identifying “orientations. . . that [include] shared rules and norms as well as some general points of view. . . . toward a particular setting. . .” (p. 178). While it might be construed that “a particular setting” is simply the Afterschool Program, for the purposes of interpretation and discussion, this setting is expanded to include other aspects of teacher education, as suggested by Soloranzo’s (1997) four dimensions. Critical Race Theory assists in extending beyond a discussion of the isolated experiences of White pre-service teachers because they are 1) members of the dominant culture; 2) have the accumulated knowledge and experiences of being educated in a racist educational system; 3) are

currently enrolled in a course designed to assist them in recognizing and confronting a hegemonic system of oppression in order to work for social justice and equality.

Thus, the following section of the findings revealed how White pre-service teachers' orientations about their interaction with the Black/African American students, that either supported or challenged the master narrative, with specific attention to presuppositions about neutrality, color-blindness, normative standards of behavior, objective standards of performance, fairness of methods of assessment and evaluation, and the valuation of cultural capital (Yosso, 2005; Love, 2003).

Color-blind

The previous section on Race revealed that most of the White pre-service teachers did not mention race within the context of their reflections. This omission supports the finding that they did not "see" the students as Black/African American. Sleeter (1993) contends that teachers who claim that they don't see color are simply in denial, as it is a way to imply that race does not matter. While these White pre-service teachers did not claim that they did not see race, they, for the most part, did not mention that they recognized it either. This is an example of racism on an individual micro level resulting from institutional and macro influences (Soloranzo, 1997). Whether it is a conscious or unconscious manifestation is under debate. While it was a conscious intentional omission, King (2004) might assert that it was "dysconscious" omission that was an "uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs)" that accepts "the existing order. . . [of] dominant White norms and privileges" (p. 73). Her research shows that dysconsciousness results in White pre-service teachers' inability to identify and criticize racist ideology and oppressive societal structures. Whiteness studies

cement this speculation by pointing out that Whiteness is characterized by the unwillingness to embrace the possibility as a personal participant in the legacy of racism by evading and/or avoiding identifying oneself with a racial group. So, based on the data in this study, it appeared that the White pre-service teachers did not recognize their Whiteness as a racial construct, did not reflect on the power and privilege of that construct, and by proxy, did not “see” the color or subordination of the Black/African American students who were not born into racial privilege.

Color-blind teachers tend to embrace stereotypical deficit model perspectives that result in their inability to reflect on their roles working with Black/African American students, particularly when it comes to addressing the “underachievement” of Black/African American students (Gay, 2000). Rousseau and Tate’s (2003) study of high school teachers revealed that the teachers did not acknowledge race-related patterns in achievement or recognize the potential role of racism in the underachievement of Black/African American students. From these findings, the authors suggest that the teachers’ neutral and color-blind stance prevented them from reflecting on and examining their own practices and their role in the production of the underachievement of their Black/African American students. An example of this was found in this study embedded in the subtext of Jane’s narratives who stated that she “normally does not think about race much at all”.

Jane wrote 5,788 words throughout the twelve-week period. While she reflected on student misbehavior and student’s lack of academic motivation, she only once stated that she, herself, would have done something differently and did not once point out how what she was learning might be applied to her future classroom. From these omissions, it

appeared that Jane did not engage in any self-reflection about her own teaching practice or the approaches she took with the Black/African American students. Her journals were fraught with frustration that tended to blame the students for not responding in manners consistent with her expectations.

As discussed in a previous section on race, this study revealed that most White pre-service teachers did not mention or discuss the fact that all of the students with whom they were interacting were Black/African American students. Those who did discuss it tended to focus on themselves and their own internal conflicts of growth and consternation about race and “being a minority” in the Afterschool Program. It is certainly important for White pre-service teachers to engage in self-reflection (Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1997). However, Maddox & Soloranzo (2002) assert that they self-reflection must also include “critical inquiry. . . [in order to help pre-service teachers understand] how race is an organizing principle of individual identity and collective consciousness” (p. 76). So, while critical self-reflection is vital, Critical Race Theory suggests that reflection should move beyond the individual to also include sensitivities regarding the systemic nature of racism that results from collective color-blindness, particularly in a multicultural education course designed to address social justice issues.

Based on the data in this study, it can be concluded that a strong pattern in the White pre-service teachers’ journals was a color-blind orientation toward working with the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program. Thus, they transmitted the master narrative through their written journals in a collective voice that

implied that color/race of the Black/African American students was not important enough to recognize, identify, or validate.

Normative Standards of Behavior

Based on an analysis of the data, White pre-service teachers, also, appeared to think and reflect within the construct of normative expectations pervasive in the White dominant culture. One particular normative standard was the assumption that the students needed to be quiet, work individually, and stay “on task”. Deviations from this standardized norm were not recognized as valid legitimate approaches to effective homework completion. Nigel reflected on the behavior of the students. He wrote,

[T]he kids were being so good. Usually Jabez is trying to get out of something or just sit there and not do anything, but I did not see that today. . . I think that being happy with what is going on in the classroom shows that you are being a good teacher because all of the kids are on task.

In his eleventh journal, he related,

Speaking of being on task, Ezra is one of the hardest kids to keep on task, because he feels like he can't do well, and he likes to draw. I don't really have a problem with the kids doing other things on their free time, but when they have homework it is agrivating (sic) when they just wont (sic) do what they are supposed to do.

Another White pre-service teacher commented on how the students would continually try to engage each other in conversation while completing their homework assignments, while others remarked how challenging it was to keep the students “focused”. Jane stated that she would try to keep Kolby more focused on his work because he tended to “listen to other students conversations” instead of doing his

homework. It seemed that the White pre-service teachers did not recognize that the Black/African American students were capable of doing both, conversing and completing homework. Nigel stated, “[t] seemed that Ruby was not too mouthy today, but it seemed as though. . . her and Demetria did not get any work done today.” He made this observation, yet did not mention checking the student’s work to find out if they had completed their work or not. Incidentally, Ruby was enrolled in the gifted and talented program at her middle school.

The literature on culturally relevant teaching practices takes issue with the normative standard called “being on task” (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2000). Ladson-Billings (1994) asserts that this normative standard is not culturally relevant, and takes an “assimilationist” approach as it “encourages students to learn individually, in isolation,” rather than as a “community of learners” (p. 55). So rather than honoring the Black/African American’s cultural norm that recognizes the importance of community and solidarity, the assimilationist approach honors a Euro-centric paradigm based on competition and individualism (King, 2004; & Ladson-Billings, 1994). As stated earlier, King (2004) reports that collaboration and co-operation are the learning approaches preferred by Black/African American students, in addition to being the strategy that enhances their academic performance. Gay (2000) asserts that

[T]hese approaches are committed to helping students of color maintain identity and connections with their ethnic groups and communities; develop a sense of community, camaraderie, and shared responsibility; and acquire an ethic of success. Expectations and skills are not taught as separate entities but are woven

together into an integrated whole that permeates. . . curriculum content. . . and [the basic operation] of the classroom. (p. 30)

White pre-service teachers who adhered to the normative standard and employed assimilationist techniques, supported the master narrative in their thinking and their actions. The support of the master narrative may not be on a conscious level. Lawrence (1995) asserts that

We do not recognize the ways in which our cultural experience has influenced our beliefs about race or the occasions on which those beliefs affect our actions . . . producing racial discrimination fueled by unconscious motivation. (p. 237)

This is echoed by King (2004) whose research shows that this “dysconsciousness” results in pre-service teachers’ inability to identify and criticize racist ideology and oppressive societal structures.

In contrast, two White pre-service teachers conveyed their recognition of the contributions of two Black/African American students who exhibited the ability to work with other students in a supportive manner. Angel stated that “Olivia and I were able to help Julie with some of her letters. This was a great opportunity for Olivia to show leadership skills by helping Julie who is younger than her”. Anne remarked about Ruby’s ability to help other students and wrote, “[Ruby] is a very intelligent girl and doesn’t really need a lot of help with her homework. She was actually helping the other girls throughout the time with their homework”. These reflections indicate an awareness of the skills that the Black/African American students brought to the Afterschool Program. These types of reflections and actions indicate a challenge to the master narrative and normative standard that prefers that students work in isolation.

An additional contrasting perspective was offered by one White pre-service teacher who seemed to recognize the schism between the normative standard that heralds docile compliance as an indicator of a “good student” versus a culturally sensitive observation that considered the perspective of the student. She reflected,

. . . I noticed. . . this program is only good for one kind of children; the ones that learn when they sit still at (sic) read it from a book. I have learned that it takes more energy for a 10-year-old to sit still than to run around a building, we have to use that energy as teachers/tutors.

In an earlier entry Dee challenged the master narrative, through her speculation on the normative standards that were required within the context of the Afterschool Program structure. She wrote,

the children were very loud today and they were told to be quiet many times. If[t] made me think; when did the children get out of school? If they first get out of school around three after having spend the whole day sitting on a chair being [quiet] and doing homework, I can understand why they have difficulties being concentrated again for two [h]ours being trapped to a chair, being [quiet] and doing homework.

Dee, then, challenged the master narrative as it relates to the nature and purpose of schooling in the United States. She reflected,

Afterschool programs are different in our countries; I think it has something to do with, what the countries values are! In Denmark we value the progress of learning – in America you value the result of learning!”

None of the other White pre-service teachers critiqued or challenged the purpose or nature of schooling in the United States. From their lack of reflection and critique, and compliant participation in the dominant culture's perspective and approach to education, it can be concluded that most of the White pre-service teachers supported the master narrative that legitimatizes a one-size-fits all approach to education on the structural/institutional levels (Ladson-Billings, 2004).

Tracking Sheets

The Afterschool Program structure required that the Black/African American student complete the tracking sheets on a daily basis. They were required to write down the homework assignments that were given in each class for each day. Furthermore, the tracking sheets were supposed to be completed prior to their arrival to the program. This program requirement was part of the program structure per the specifications of the Children's Youth Minister as a means of communication between the students' teachers, their parents and the program administrator. While the students were "required" to complete them while in class and then have all of their teachers sign the sheets after each class, it was a rare occasion when it occurred. Because the students did not usually have the sheets completed, as the Education Coordinator, I accommodated the students by altering the program design to allow for the completion of the tracking sheets within the first fifteen minutes of the program, while the students ate their snacks and socialized. In essence, it was a transitional period designated for the completion and review of the Black/African American students' sheets.

Most of the White pre-service teachers mentioned the tracking sheets in their journal reflections. Their reflections revealed that many of the students did not have the

sheets completed prior to coming to the program, and often described their frustrations with getting the students to complete the sheets. The journal narratives often included how the Black/African American students responded when asked to complete the sheets, such as calling the sheets “stupid”, “eye-rolling,” and other gestures of non-compliance or independence.

Jane appeared to advocate for the use of the tracking sheets. In her fourth journal, she wrote, “I really think that the tracking sheets would be a good thing for [Junior] as long as he fills them out. That way we will know when things were assigned and be able to make sure that he is on top of it”.

While Jane asserted that it would be a “good thing for [Junior],” she supported her reasoning from an authority position by stating “That way we will know. . .” about assignments and “make sure he is on top of it”. So in essence, she did not reflect on how to teach Junior to stay organized, use the sheets for *his* benefit, or use the information on the sheets as tool to engage the student in dialogue about the essence of the school day or the nature of the course work assigned to him. Those approaches would honor the student’s voice in the teaching and learning relationship. Her perspective appeared to support the normative construct that required the use of the tracking sheet as a method of assessing compliance via a rule introduced by the program.

John also seemed to support the use of tracking sheets and reflected a harsher response to the students who did not complete them. In his reflection, he wrote,

I think in the future the kids should already have their tracking sheets filled out, and if they don't their (sic) should be some sort of punishment. They act too crazy when filling out the sheets, and I don't think it would be fair for me to punish the

kid I am with every week for not having their tracking sheets filled out, and everyone else doesn't get punished.

Over the course of the twelve weeks and the collective total of approximately 130 interactions with the Black/African students about completing their tracking sheets, only one White pre-service teacher reflected on the purpose of the tracking sheets. Dee wrote, “I still not sure if I understand what good the tracking sheets does, because we don’t really use them for anything. . . I don’t know if they are being used by the teacher, the Education Coordinator or the parents!”

While the White pre-service teachers reported their many struggles with having the Black/African American students complete these sheets on a daily basis, it seemed that they all accepted this normative standard and supported it as a fair assessment of performance in terms of behavior and compliance. Students who quietly complied with completing the sheets were labeled “good”; while those who challenged the sheets were considered unmotivated and discipline problems. Lack of consideration of student voice about the tracking sheet combined with strict unquestioning adherence to the “rule,” might be considered support of the master narrative. Incidentally, the Black/African American students were already required to keep an “Agenda” book as part of the daily programming at their schools. So essentially, they were being asked to complete the same task twice, one for the program, and one for their schools.

Standardized Testing

The master narrative asserts that there are fair standards of performance, and objective measures to gauge performance (Love, 2003). Some White pre-service teachers seem to support that piece of the master narrative. Nancy reflected on how she brought

what she has learned in one of her education courses and applied to the Afterschool Program experience. Her assertion implied that standardized tests are neutral and fair assessments of student ability. She wrote,

NCLB requires that all students meet state standards in reading, math, and science. In reading, the goal is that every student be able to read at grade level or above by the third grade. To watch Jacob struggle with reading is such an indication to me that NCLB is correct in mandating reading standards within public schools.

Kale reported on a student's disinterest in working on the ISTEP preparation packet. (The packet materials were supplied by the Afterschool Program's director, the Children's Youth Minister. The ISTEP packet is preparatory instrument designed to assist students prepare for a standardized test). He wrote,

. . . [M]y student was not that interested in what we would be working on. . . ISTEP prep and she really didn't want to get in the mood to do it. I said. . . she would have to do this no matter what. . . [W]e had to tell her that there was no other choice. She really didn't like that and after grading her packet I found many mistakes all pertaining to her guessing.

Anne described a similar experience, and then follows with how she might have remedied the situation. She reflected, on her second visit to the Afterschool Program in which it was her second week working with Jabez,

[H]e was totally uninterested in doing anything school related. We worked on ISTEP prep for over an hour and it took everything in me to get him to read. . .

questions. He was unmotivated and didn't try and do any of the problems. He kept asking when we were going to be done and when we could do something else. . .

In reflecting on what she might have done differently, she stated, "I would try and change his attitude toward practicing for ISTEP. . . [and] make him more aware how important ISTEP is and how it can totally affect his future".

She closed the journal entry with, ". . . in the future when I get in more situations [like this one, I will] stay on top of the students to get there (sic) homework done".

While Nancy explicitly stated the importance of standardized testing, the other White pre-service teachers conveyed their support by not challenging the content or purpose of the ISTEP materials. Instead, their focus was on the Black/African American students' non-compliance. The White pre-service teachers interpreted this non-compliance by stating that the Black/African American students were "unmotivated" and "not uninterested" in prepping for the standardized test.

While Anne expressed her frustration that Jabez was not motivated, she contradicted herself by stating that the student wanted to do "something else", which means that the student was motivated to do "something", but that "something" was not schoolwork, in accordance, perhaps, within the normative construct, i.e. ISTEP preparation. Her reflection also conveyed an orientation that indicated an inflated importance of the ISTEP test, as "it can totally affect his future". From this reflection, it can be concluded that Anne has bought into the "importance" of this standardized test, with no reflection about the actual value of its content or whether the test was a valid measurement of knowledge. In essence, she appeared to support the majoritarian story that heralds the ISTEP as a necessary and valid assessment of knowledge.

According to Critical Race Scholars and educators (Love, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Crenshaw, 1995) the majoritarian story asserts that these tests are objective and crafted to measure the abilities of all students in a fair manner. “Majoritarian claims of objectivity mute discussion about potential test bias that privilege white students over African American students” (Love, 2003, p. 231). Failure to challenge this myth results in legitimization of this type of testing as the normative standard of ability and intelligence. According to Love (2003), the sheer quantity of data demonstrating the superior performance of White children over the performance of Black/African American students leads to reaffirm the “intellectual superiority inferiority” myth (p. 231). White pre-service teachers have participated in this type of testing regime throughout the formation of their education. They should be made aware that these types of tests are not accurate in determining the abilities or potentialities of their future students. White students doing well on tests is not, in it of itself, an indicator of equitable testing. Just because members of the dominant culture have been successful in achieving on standardized tests, does not mean the tests are fair.

In a previous section (assumptions), it was revealed that the White pre-service teachers struggled with mastering the content of the ISTEP in addition to other homework assignments. While they mentioned their struggles with the work, it did not seem to help them empathize with how difficult it might be for the twelve to fourteen year-olds who were also engaging with the same content. Furthermore, they did not critique the ISTEP test packet content or the relevancy of the tests.

In all of the White pre-service teachers’ reflections concerning curricular content, there were only two comments in which the White pre-service teacher challenged or

questioned the nature of the work required of the Black/African American students or how it was being transmitted in school. John wrote a brief statement that read, “In helping with her homework she did all of her worksheet except one question in which she needed help with. The question was worded terribly and I didn’t even understand what it was asking”. Another participant reflected a little more deeply about a student’s homework. Jane wrote,

After about five minutes I realized why he would hate science, that worksheet made absolutely no sense. It did not go along with the chapter he was reading at all. . . I had a hunch that Ezekiel’s teacher was really old and had been teaching for probably the last thirty years. . . sure enough his teacher is a little old lady. . . . giving out this same worksheet for years, but the textbooks keep changing. She does not bother to alter her worksheets. . . It makes me angry because it makes kids hate the subject when it could be really fun.

Later in the tutoring session with Ezekiel, Jane learned that he had received four Fs. She stated that she was “confused” because he seemed like a “really good student”. She described her verbal exchange with the student and wrote,

I asked him if he tended to just forget to turn in his completed work because from what I had seen he should not have been doing so bad. He said he did sometimes. Then I was like do you forget everything during the tests? He said that he did a lot. I think test prep would be good for Ezekiel. When he has a test coming up someone needs to review with him.

While Jane seemed to challenge the science worksheet, she did not comment

on or critique the form of assessment used to test Ezekiel's knowledge. So, while she confronted the dominant order in one sense, she supported it another, particularly in describing how she might help remedy Ezekiel's test failures. Essentially, she seemed to blame him for forgetting everything for the test, instead of offering a solution that modified the form of testing, such as conducting a science experiment or participating in a science fair.

The White pre-service teachers' reflections conveyed few challenges or critiques of the content required of the Black/African American students. Thus it can be concluded that the White pre-service teachers supported the master narrative and the "official curriculum" including the culturally sanctioned transmission of that curriculum. While the "official curriculum" goes well beyond simple content and refers to a systemic transmission of knowledge and culture, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine it more thoroughly. However, it is recognized as part of the majoritarian story crafted by the White dominant culture.

The myth of meritocracy is a tool of the master narrative/majoritarian story, it presupposes that the methods of assessment and evaluation of student performance are fair, objective and race neutral (Love, 2003). The majoritarian story asserts that these tests are crafted to measure the abilities of all students in a fair manner. The story silences a dialogue "about potential test bias that privileges white students over African American students" (Love, 2003, p. 231). The White pre-service teachers failed to challenge this myth. Through their compliance and lack of critique, they appeared to legitimize this type of testing as the normative standard in the measurement of ability and intelligence. Thus, it can be concluded that they predominantly supported the master narrative.

The Valuation of Cultural Capital

Without reintroducing the excerpted data and its analysis in its entirety, from the “Assumptions” sections of this manuscript, this portion of “Supporting or Challenging the Master Narrative” section will provide a brief overview of how the analysis of two of the “Assumptions” sub-sections (Culturally Deficient Students and Underestimated Student Potential) supported the “majoritarian story”.

In Yosso’s (2005) article, *Whose Culture has Capital?*, she details the value of the “aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital. . . that draws on the knowledges of Students of Color. . . from their homes and communities into the classroom. . . [and] acknowledges strengths and resources within communities of color” (p. 69).

By redefining the nature of social resources within the Black/African American communities, she provides an alternative perspective, specifically, a perspective that challenges the master narrative’s definition of cultural capital. With that in mind, an analysis of the White pre-service teachers’ journals revealed that alternative forms of capital were not valued or recognized. Additionally, potential indicators of capital seemed to be misinterpreted. For example, when Jabez’ mother stopped in at the Afterschool Program to “talk to another lady and get some work done,” Anne perceived this as “distracting” to the student and failed to recognize that Jabez’s mother’s presence at the program site might be an indicator of her support, and therefore, a cultural resource for Jabez.

Another indicator of the lack of recognition of cultural capital can be found in the omission of the White pre-service teachers’ collective recognition of the fact that the

Black/ African American students might have resources within the context of the Afterschool Program, specifically, the church and church community itself. It appeared that the White pre-service teachers were so incredibly focused on academics and the homework component, that they missed noticing the resource of the Black/African American church in which the Afterschool Program was held. As stated earlier, (King, 2004) spirituality is a highly valued cultural resource as is the church, as it is recognized as “the central pillar of the community” (p. 470). Failure to recognize this resource as a legitimate support did not validate the cultural capital of the Black/African American students. Thus, it can be concluded that the White pre-service teachers supported the master narrative’s view of the dominant culture’s definition of cultural resources.

In addition to not recognizing the students’ church membership as a cultural resource, the White pre-service teachers seemed to convey “deficit model” thinking in many of their interactions with the Black/African American students. Deficit model thinking supports stereotypical perspectives about Black/African American students (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001). These stereotypes can be found in the transmission of the master narrative. One stereotype, from the liberal perspective of the White dominant culture can be found in the literature on White pre-service teachers that reveal that Black/African American students need interventions from Whites in order to rise out of their oppressed positions. Pennington (2007) found that White pre-service teachers viewed themselves as “saviors”. The findings from this study revealed a similar stereotype in reflections that expressed perspectives that the White pre-service teachers were able to offer their knowledge and experience about higher education, implying that the Black/African American students did not already have this as a resource. In fact, at

the time of this study, the Children's Youth Minister was a doctoral candidate in the field of education.

Other stereotypes revealed within the context of the White pre-service teachers' reflections that supported the master narrative were their interpretations that the Black/African American students lacked interest and motivation in regard to education. It appeared that when the Black/African American students deviated from the White pre-service teachers' normative expectations, the journals reported narrative accounts that reinforced stereotypes that supported the majoritarian story. This pattern was particularly strong within the White pre-service teachers' exclamations that under-estimated the Black/African American students' academic potential.

While a few White pre-service teachers challenged the master narrative in their reflections, the findings revealed that their support of the master narrative appeared to be a stronger pattern in their reflective journals throughout their twelve-week experience serving as tutors as the Afterschool Program. Overall the White pre-service teachers appeared to approach working with the Black/African American students with a "color-blind" lens that did not recognize race. They appeared to support standardized testing and traditional forms of assessing knowledge and performance in addition to perceiving the Black/African American students from a culturally deficit model based on the White dominant cultures definition of cultural resources. Lastly, they transmitted those perceptions in their reflective journals.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand how White pre-service teachers constructed knowledge and made meaning out of their experiences while serving as tutors

at an after school tutoring program in which 100% of the students were Black/African American. This chapter presented the findings of this study and explored the following themes relative to the White pre-service teachers' reflections and knowledge construction: Assumptions, Teaching Techniques, Relationships, Behavior/Discipline Issues, Race, and Supporting or Challenging the Master Narrative. The following chapter discusses the findings, presents conclusions, and offers recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to understand how White pre-service teachers constructed knowledge and made meaning out of their experiences while serving as tutors at an afterschool tutoring program in which 100% of the students were Black/African American. Nine White pre-service teachers in their sophomore year at Midwestern University participated in this qualitative study. Each White pre-service teacher allowed their written reflective journals to be analyzed for research purposes.

The participants in this study crafted narratives in response to Critical Incident Technique prompts designed to elicit reflections and descriptions of events relative to their roles as teachers interacting with the Black/African American students enrolled in an Afterschool Program located in an urban setting. The White pre-service teachers' written reflections were submitted on a weekly basis for a period of twelve weeks as part of a requirement for the introduction to multicultural education course in which they were enrolled. The theoretical frameworks for this study were Constructivism and Critical Race Theory, as they both anchored and guided the study's design and implementation.

The findings in the previous chapter will now be synthesized in relation to the four research questions and situated in the literature. Conclusions and recommendations are also discussed in this chapter.

An analysis of the data yielded the following themes relative to the White pre-service teachers' reflections and knowledge construction: Assumptions, Teaching Techniques, Behavior/Discipline Issues, Relationships, Race, and Supporting or Challenging the Master Narrative.

Assumptions are the previously held sets of ideas that the White pre-service teachers brought to the tutoring experience. The Teaching Techniques theme highlights the storied accounts the White pre-service teachers reported in regard to their specific tutoring activities with the Black/African American students. The Relationships theme reveals White pre-service teachers' perspectives about the importance of building relationships with the Black/African American students, and how those relationships influence the teaching and learning process. Behavior/Discipline Issues are accounts of behavior management observations and interventions. The theme on Race reveals how the participants discuss the issue of race, racism and diversity in relation to their experiences at the Afterschool Program. The final theme, Supporting or Challenging the Master Narrative, reveals how/if White pre-service teachers confront the majoritarian story in their reflections or interactions with the Black/African American students enrolled in the Afterschool Program.

Research Question One: What do White pre-service teachers focus on in the critical reflective process?

Based on the narratives crafted by the White pre-service teachers in this study, it was revealed that they predominantly reflected on teaching techniques, behavior/discipline issues, their relationships with the Black/African American students, and their perceptions of the students. According to Kubler LaBoskey's (1993) work with pre-service teachers, their reflections are focused predominantly on curriculum, classroom management, context and norms of schools, and assessment. This is partially congruent with the findings of this study, as the areas of focus were teaching techniques, behavior/discipline issues and relationships. Some, but little reflection was revealed in the areas of curriculum, assessment, and the context and norms of the school, or the contextual setting of the Afterschool Program.

It may be argued that the White pre-service teachers were not responsible for curriculum assessment or the critique of the program and/ school norms. The counter argument can be made that 1) some of the White pre-service teachers did address those issues, so it is a reasonable expectation; and 2) reflections on areas of curriculum and normative standards certainly fall within the realm of the stated goals and objectives of the introduction to multicultural education course in which they were enrolled.

Specifically, the goals and objectives of the course were as follows:

[To examine] social factors that affect teacher decision-making and student achievement in United States schools; the need for intercultural competence, culturally-informed instructional strategies, promotion of social justice and reduction of racism. . . in order to create democratic classrooms; and [to provide]

pre-service teachers the opportunity to better understand the impact of race and class on educational attainment and to appreciate the strengths and resources of inner-city residents. ("Midwestern University: College of Education," 2007)

White pre-service teachers seemed to predominantly focus on their direct interactions with the students, many of which were sans the contextual and community influences in which those interactions occurred. This is a dangerous enterprise, specifically in regard to White pre-service teacher effectiveness in working with Black/African American students. Dewey (1938) asserts that lack of reflection “may lead a person too readily to fall into prejudices. . . weaken his independent judgment. . . [and] even [lead] to extreme partisanship that regards it as disloyal to question beliefs of a group to which one belongs” (Dewey, 1938, p. 29). This plays out in ways that support the White dominant culture’s view and approach to education, and doesn’t make space for alternative perspectives, specifically culturally responsive approaches that value, legitimate, and respond to the needs of Black/African American students.

Another issue to report in the findings prior to a discussion about what the White pre-service teachers focused on in the reflective process, is to note the spectrum of depth in the narrative structures themselves. Some “reflections” appeared to be more like reports that outlined the events that transpired during the tutoring session, such as, “we watched a movie” or “just played game”. Others reflections offered rich descriptions about events that also included insights, speculations, feelings about those events, their roles as tutors, and introspection about the Black/African American students. Based on an analysis of the narrative structures within in the journals, it appeared that the White pre-service teachers were consistent throughout the twelve-week period. In essence, if the

first entry was a simple report, the narrative structure did not change much over time.

Conversely, if rich details were provided, that structure also was also maintained.

Overall, the later was the predominant narrative structure.

Teaching Techniques

In regard to reflections on teaching techniques, the White pre-service teachers provided an array of descriptions in regard to how methods were employed. The continuum ranged from surface renditions of events to very detailed methods that employed improvisation and creativity, some of which employed symbiotic teaching approaches that seemed to provide the foundation for building relationships. The extreme variations in their teaching methods resulted in extreme variations of Black/African American student receptivity to the learning process.

The White pre-service teachers who reflected on teaching techniques that employed a “banking method” that encouraged rote memorization and a top down approach to student learning, reflected on their frustrations with the Black/African American students who did not appear to be receptive to this approach (Freire, 1974). In contrast, when the White pre-service teachers were able to improvise; apply creative techniques; offer Black/African American students additional information that was relevant to them; and convey an attitude of fun and personal enjoyment in the teaching and learning process, the result was a more positive experience for both the Black/African American students and the White pre-service teachers themselves.

Examples of responsive teaching include bringing the topic of fireworks to the discussion when a student stated that he did not like science; making the memorization of bones for a health class interactive and relative to the student by having the student point

to his own bones as a quizzing technique; laughing in the face of challenging math problems; and putting the learning in the hands of the students via the use of student produced flash cards. Symbiotic interactions with the Black/African American students were particularly identifiable when the White pre-service teachers used the terms “we” and “worked together,” examples include “reading together,” “laughing and having fun with math.” Another example, was reported by Dee who assisted a student with the writing process by engaging him in dialogue because “he was having trouble putting his thoughts on paper.” This is consistent with King’s (2004) assertion about the importance of engaging Black/African American students in dialogue to assist in the writing process by building on a cultural strength “grounded in African American linguistic traditions” (p. 473).

This finding is consistent with the writings of Ladson-Billings (1994), Gay (2000), & Yosso (2002) who assert that teachers must be culturally responsive to their students. This means that teacher education must prepare its incumbent teachers with teaching techniques that honor student voice, skills that assist pre-service teachers in connecting the content to the student in ways that make it relevant to them, and also approaches that encourage students in participating in their own learning processes.

While this speaks to actual teaching methods, it does not address the continuum of the levels of reflectivity on the part of the White pre-service teachers. Van Manen (1977) defined three levels: practical/technical, social/political, and moral/ethical all of which should be addressed in the interactions between White pre-service teachers in their work with Black/African American students. When White pre-service teachers reflect on surface issues, such as the practical and technical aspects of teaching, they miss the

opportunity to factor in the social aspects, specifically, aspects that are culturally responsive and relevant. Likewise, failure to focus on moral and ethical aspects of teaching and education, does not allow for critique or question of the social structures that undergird the education system itself. LaBoskey Kubler (1993) takes issue with Van Manen's (1977) perspective because she asserts that "it implies a hierarchy that devalues the practical". . . and that "each category is as important as the other" (p. 26). The findings in this study suggest otherwise. While it is certainly important to reflect on the technical aspects of the teaching and learning processes, it can be concluded that the social/political as well as the moral/ethical dimensions, influence the technical aspects of teaching.

Critical Race Theory asserts that because "racism is endemic" in the United States, White pre-service teacher reflections should not only focus on the social/political and moral/ethical domains, those domains should be central to the focus (Tate, 1999, p. 256). Apple (1990), Friere (1974), and others would concur that teaching is a political act; therefore, the technical aspects of teaching cannot be separated from the political act of transmitting knowledge. The findings of this study revealed that reflection with attention to the social/political and /moral ethical domains is a necessary inclusion.

While many White pre-service teachers appeared to be receptive and responsive to the learning needs of the Black/African American students, others were not, and did not seem to recognize the social and ethical layers imbedded in the execution of their teaching methods. Additionally, they did not appear to be reflective or take responsibility for their part in the learning process, particularly when their approaches were unsuccessful. This is consistent with Rousseau and Tate's (2003) findings of high school

teachers who revealed that lack of reflection in the social domains resulted in their inability to acknowledge race-related patterns in achievement or recognize the potential role of racism in the underachievement of Black/African American students.

Teacher education is responsible for ensuring that White pre-service teachers are schooled in the art and practice of reflection, in the employ of their teaching methods, and how those methods impact Black/African American student learning (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Failure to include reflections about social/political and moral/ethical domains as they relate to the technical aspects of teaching, leaves White pre-service teachers ill prepared to understand how those dynamics play out in classroom interactions when working with Black/African American students. This results in miscommunication and misunderstandings of Black/African American students, to the detriment of both the White pre-service teachers and the Black/African American students.

An example of miscommunication and misunderstandings was related in Jane's narrative relating her experience with Junior when she "couldn't get him to stop crying" or "focus on his homework". She was frustrated and at a loss of what to do. Her reflections focused on all of the things she tried to do, but were void of any cultural considerations about the Black/African American male student or the context of the Black/African American church in which the Afterschool Program was administered. Had she been able to reflect on the socio-cultural issues, or a larger moral/ethical framework that includes the historical marginalization of Black/African American students, perhaps her reflections and reactions might have been different.

White pre-service teachers focused on teaching techniques in the reflective process. The essence of those reflections ranged in depth and variations in relation to

cultural sensitivity and responsiveness. Based on the findings in this study, it appeared that the White pre-service teachers who reported acute cultural sensitivity in their tutoring activities were more likely to establish productive relationships with the Black/African American students.

Relationships with Black/African American Students

The findings revealed that most of the White pre-service teachers reflected on their interest in and the importance of establishing positive relationships with the Black/African American students. Based on the findings, it was the strongest pattern in the narrative reflections. While most felt that they were able to establish relationships that enhanced student learning, others reflected on their failed attempts to connect with the students.

The White pre-service teachers who were able to maintain a responsive stance to the students' needs appeared to be more successful in building and maintaining productive working relationships with the Black/African American students. Examples of how White pre-service teacher responsiveness influenced relationships was identified in the reflections that detailed the nature of the conversations between the tutors and the Black/African American students. Moments of feeling disconnected were revealed in situations in which the White pre-service teachers did not seem to have established relationships built on validating or honoring the students' voices, situations that often resulted in "behavior/discipline issues". How the White pre-service teachers assessed their connectivity levels seemed to impact their perceptions, and therefore how they interacted and responded to the Black/African American students enrolled in the

Afterschool Program, which also further impacted relationships, or “behavior/discipline issues”.

It seemed that when White pre-service teachers engaged the students in conversation prior to and while doing homework, the dialogue not only helped foster relationships, but also seemed to influence homework completion. Freire (2005) advocates for ongoing dialogue with students in an effort to build relationships. He asserts that “Our relationships with learners demand that we respect them. . . . be aware of the concrete conditions of their world. . . . Without this, we have no access to the way they think” (p. 58). Sleeter’s (1995) work with White pre-service teachers, further attests to the importance of dialogue as a necessary component to forging relationships.

These reflections revealed that the White pre-service teachers recognized the importance of establishing relationships with the Black/African American students. Furthermore, when they engaged the Black/African American students in dialogue, as suggested by the culturally responsive approach to teaching and learning, the students became more receptive and open to learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 1997; Yosso, 2002). It is important to note that the nature of the dialogue between the White pre-service teachers and the Black/African American students was expanded beyond the specific homework tasks at hand. Conversations included listening to the students discuss their outside interests, thoughts and goals about school, along with the employ of creative activities that deviated from their regular homework. Also, it appeared that the White pre-service teachers who employed creative teaching techniques, as illuminated in the previous section, were also those who seemed to be able to establish positive symbiotic working relationships with the students.

The missing dialogue between the White pre-service teachers and Black/African American students that might have forged stronger relationships, was conversation about the context of both the community and church settings. It seemed that both the students and the teachers might have been able to establish better understandings of each other, had those dialogues occurred.

Based on the findings from this study about relationships between White pre-service teachers and Black/African American students, it is recommended that teacher education programs offer more opportunities for incumbent teachers to engage in experiences and situate those experiences in community-based settings. Those experiences should include one-on-one encounters between prospective teachers and Black/African American students, as it appeared that, over time, the teachers benefited by applying creative teaching techniques that resulted in positive working relationships.

Another way to look at the theme of relationships, is to shift the lens from exclusively examining the one-on-one relationships between the White pre-service teachers and Black/African American students and expand the lens to include a discussion about how the group of White pre-service teachers were dispatched to the Local Baptist Church as a collective. While it is beyond the scope of this study to assess the actual teacher education program at Midwestern University, the manner in which the White pre-service teachers were dispatched to the Local Baptist Church must be recognized as part of the discussion, particularly in regard to how the White pre-service teachers developed relationships with the Black/African American students.

Some partnerships between teacher education programs and community-based settings allow the pre-service teachers complete autonomy in determining when they will

serve their required hours. Sometimes, there is no concrete schedule and they may come and go at their leisure. In contrast, the White pre-service teachers in this study committed to specific days and times and were required to maintain consistent schedules on a week-to-week basis.

The differences between the ways in which White pre-service teachers are dispatched to the community setting, calls for an examination of purpose. Is the purpose to assist Black/African American students with homework? Learn more about ‘another culture’? Learn more about the “self” as is the focus of Whiteness studies? (Houser, 2008). It seems that While this might seem trivial, it is foundational to the question, “Who is teaching whom? For what purpose?”

Some Whiteness studies reveal that when teachers are engaged in community-based experiences, the White pre-service teachers get so bogged down with coming to grips with the fact that they are privileged by sheer membership in a dominant culture, that the semester is over, before “the next” step, is reached (Marx, 2004; Pennington, 2007), the step that propels them forward in learning what to do as White teachers in a racist society and school structure. Therefore, it is important for teacher education to make multicultural education and working for social justice, the centerpiece, not a preliminary course prior to methods course. This course should work in tandem with methods courses and subsequent courses throughout the teacher education program. If higher education makes it a priority, perhaps, the incumbent teachers might recognize the implied meaning, the importance and value of working for social justice, in addition to engaging in experiences that foster the development of culturally responsive teachers.

With that being said, the White pre-service teachers' community-based experiences in this study, included a commitment on their part to serve as tutors on a specific day each week. This allowed both the White pre-service teachers and the Black/African American students to establish relationships due to the consistency of the schedule. Furthermore, this approach sends the message to the White pre-service teachers that the lab experience is important and should not be relegated to the margins of their individual schedules where they could fit this in, based on other "more important" commitments. Designing the community-based experience that required that the White pre-service teachers commit to a specific day to tutor, might have made a difference, and enhanced, the opportunity for the White pre-service teachers to forge relationships with Black/African American students.

Behavior/Discipline Issues

In Kohn's (1997) book *Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community*, he asserts that actively engaging students in the learning process is an antidote to behavior problems. He posits that productive engaging learning environments will not leave time for students to engage in disruptive behavior. It must be clear that active engagement does not mean "busy work". Black/African American students, as well as all students, should be engaging in learning activities that are meaningful to them. Culturally responsive teachers understand this (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The findings from this study revealed that some White pre-service teachers were able to make this connection, others were not. Again, the White pre-service teachers' reflections revealed a continuum of understandings about how to actively engage students as a preemptive strategy to circumvent behavior problems, while others employed

authoritative approaches with little consideration or recognition of how those approaches sabotaged the learning process.

Additionally, some White pre-service teachers seemed to learn to shift their perspectives and “tolerance” levels regarding the audible volume of actively engaged students. The shift in perspective illustrated the ability to also shift the onus of responsibility from student to self in the determination of what is and is not an actual “behavior problem”. According to Gay & Kirkland (2003), critical self-reflection is a necessity in the preparation of culturally responsive teachers because it provides the White pre-service teachers the opportunity to grow in knowledge of who they are as people, better understand the context in which they teach, in addition to questioning their knowledge, assumptions and beliefs.

Failure to exercise in the self-reflective process results in the inability to recognize the cultural gaps between White pre-service teachers and Black/African American students, which further results in miscommunication that impedes the development of relationships. Swartz & Bakari (2005) assert that failing to address those cultural gaps results in misinterpretations of behavior that then result in disciplinary actions and punishment. Obidah and Howard (2005) corroborate this insight by stating , “. . . racial and cultural differences between teachers and students contribute to the ways in which teachers view students’ behaviors as disruptive as well as teachers’ perceptions of their ability to effectively serve the needs of these students” (p. 251).

The findings from this study revealed that, over time, some of the White pre-service teachers were beginning to recognize their roles and responsibilities in “setting the tone” in the learning environment; however, the other end of the perceptual spectrum

seemed to illustrate an outward projection placing all of the blame on the Black African/American students with little reflection about their roles. This is consistent with findings from other studies (Marx, 2004; Hytten & Warren, 2003; McIntyre, 1997; and Sleeter, 1995).

Successful behavior management interventions seemed to result when the White pre-service teachers were able to connect with the Black/African American students through the establishment of positive working relationships, and approach behavior interventions with respect. It appeared that the White pre-service teachers who responded from culturally sensitive approaches that honored Black/African American student voice seemed to be the most successful in turning misbehavior into educative experiences.

From these findings, it appeared that White pre-service teachers might benefit from additional information pertaining to the statistics that reveal the disproportionate ratio of “behavior problems” and number of discipline referrals of Black/African American from a different perspective, a perspective that provides a counternarrative that reveals information about Black/African American students’ ways of expressing themselves demonstratively and linguistically (Love, 2003, & Yosso, 2002). With more information about cultural differences, perhaps White pre-service teachers might be able to recognize that alternative forms of expression are valued and legitimate; should not be interpreted as disruptive; and may be used in the actual teaching/learning process.

When the Black/African American students did not have much homework, such as during the week of ISTEP testing or before a holiday break, the White pre-service teachers expressed a range of perspectives and interpretations regarding student behavior. The White pre-service teachers who maintained an authoritative stance might be well-

served from additional information about the relationship between “misbehavior” as a result of poor planning in keeping students actively engaged. An increased awareness about this phenomenon, might help White pre-service teachers recognize their roles and responsibilities in the manifestation of discipline problems.

In closing, the White pre-service teachers focused on teaching techniques, behavior/discipline issues, and relationships in the reflective process.

Research Question Two: What are the White pre-service teachers’ personal assumptions about teaching, learning and interacting with Black/African American students?

Teacher educators agree that all White pre-service teachers bring sets of assumptions to their educative experiences (Sleeter, 1993; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Van Manen, 1977; Zeichner, 1996). The question then becomes, what are those assumption, and how does teacher education assist its incumbents in dislodging assumptions that are counterproductive to their learning processes, resulting in counter productivity in their future classrooms? Many assert that the art of reflection assists in that process (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Zeichner & Liston, 1996; King, 1991; and Sleeter, 1995).

The White pre-service teachers’ journals conveyed the essence of their assumptions about working with Black/African American students. The findings revealed a spectrum of assumptions that included their initial assumptions; assumptions that underestimated the Black/African American students’ abilities; assumptions about the level of difficulty of the students’ homework assignments; and assumptions that seemed to be constructed on the basis of some kind of perceived cultural deficit.

Initial Assumptions

White pre-service teachers' revealed that their initial assumptions about Black/African American students were unfounded, specifically references to their amazement about the academic prowess of the students enrolled in the Afterschool Program. It is not surprising that White pre-service teachers might bring negative assumptions about Black/African American students to the Afterschool Program, as the master narrative as fully indoctrinated them with this myth as stated by Ogbu (1990), "minorities have not developed a widespread effort optimism or strong cultural ethic of hard work and perseverance in the pursuit of education" (p. 53). The literature is full of reports that identify Black/African American students as "culturally disadvantaged," "at risk," and "culturally deprived" (Ladson-Billings, 1994b). These "deficiencies" are also "evident" in the statistics that report the academic achievement gaps between Black/African American students and Whites (2007).

Middle School Content is Easy

The findings also revealed that the White pre-service teachers were challenged by the content of the homework and the ISTEP test materials that were required of the Black/African American middle school students. They did not expect the middle school students to have homework assignments that college students might find challenging.

Underestimated Black/African American Potential

Based on this lower level academic expectation, these finding revealed, again, that White pre-service teachers, perhaps, underestimated the academic potential of the Black/African American students. Thus, an inference from these findings can be made that White pre-service teachers expected low levels of academic acumen from the

Black/African American students. It could be concluded that these low expectations are based on the assumption that Black/African American students might not be capable of more stringent levels of academics.

Another way to interpret and situate this finding in the field of education is to look at it from a broader systematic perspective. While this next interpretation might be a leap that deviates from the nature of this study, it seems relevant to point out that a large portion of White teachers working in urban schools are either not fully licensed and/or placed in classes to teach in content areas that are not their areas of expertise (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007). For example, a social studies teacher might be placed in a classroom to teach math. These researchers further conclude “that teacher credentials affect student achievement. . . [that] contributes to the achievement gaps in high school” (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007, p. 2). Critical Race scholars would certainly point to this fundamental institutional inequity. So, in essence, the reflections revealing that White pre-service teachers did not feel “helpful” and expressed “frustration” in assisting with homework out of their content areas, is not an attack on them; it offers an educational opportunity. The White pre-service teachers should be made aware of the fact that many urban students are not afforded equitable learning opportunities because they are not served by teachers who are fully qualified to teach them. The frustration and inadequacy they felt could be re-framed to a larger context that speaks to the lack of fairness for both the teachers who are put in positions to teach outside of their content areas, and the dismal result that occurs when that happens, which ultimately damages the urban students and creates a distortion of how the academic achievement gap between Whites and Black/African American is manifested.

Culturally Deficient Students

The findings from this study also revealed that White pre-service teachers conveyed assumptions that perceived the Black/African American students from a deficit model perspective. They either misinterpreted their observations or failed to recognize the cultural capital that the Black/African American students brought with them to the Afterschool Program. This surfaced in their reflections on student behavior when the Black/African Americans deviated from normative standards as defined by the White dominant culture. Additionally, there was little reflection about conversations pertaining to the Black/African American students' families, community, or church community. This omission revealed a finding that the White pre-service teachers were not aware of the cultural wealth the Black/African American students have available to them from those entities.

Cultural deficiency can be interpreted at both the conscious, as well as the unconscious levels. At the conscious level, White pre-service teachers should be assisted in redefining cultural wealth in order to recognize and honor the resources that Black/African American students bring to the learning environment. Yosso (2005) helps by expanding the concept of cultural resources that that may go unrecognized by the mainstream. She asserts that cultural wealth includes "aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital. . . that draws on the knowledges of Students of Color. . . from their homes and communities into the classroom. . . [and] acknowledges strengths and resources within communities of color" (p. 69). Teacher educators and White pre-service teachers might benefit from these insights and expanded notions of cultural wealth. With a cognitive recognition that these resources exist, White pre-service

teachers might be more prone to identify them in their observations and interaction with Black/African American students, resulting in increased cultural sensitivity, which is foundational for culturally responsive approaches.

At the unconscious level, Lawrence posits that “We do not recognize the ways in which our cultural experience has influenced our beliefs about race or. . . [how] those beliefs affect our actions . . . producing racial discrimination fueled by unconscious motivation” (Lawrence, 1995, p. 237). In this study, it appeared that the White pre-service teachers might not have been aware that they were positioning themselves as superior or devaluing the worth and resources of the Black/African American students. Most references to the students’ families and communities did not go beyond surface observations, and did not include expanded speculations about how these entities could be resources. Additionally, they did not seem to recognize the possibility that their (the White pre-service teachers’) actions, attitudes and responses might have been based on a misperception. Therefore, it would serve White pre-service teachers well to explore their ““uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs)” (King, 2004, p. 73) in order to challenge the assumptions that limit their perspectives about cultural resources.

Lowenstein (2009) challenges the conceptualization of White teacher candidates as deficit learners who bring preconceived notions about Black/African American students to the learning environment. She suggests that White pre-service teachers are “active learners who bring resources to their learning” (p. 181). This is certainly worth consideration based on the findings of this study. There were several instances in which the White pre-service teachers expressed their ambition to “learn more about the

students” and the need for “more information about their backgrounds”. Additionally, one White pre-service teacher did note the relationship between one of the students and the pastor of the Local Baptist Church and recognized him “as an important person in her life”. This suggested that, perhaps, the White pre-service teachers are receptive to new information about the Black/African American students on a personal level, which could then be foundational for an expanded awareness of the cultural strength within the students’ communities.

Teacher educators who employ the use of the counternarrative within the design of courses that dispatch White students into Black/African American communities have found that this method is effective in disrupting assumptions (Sleeter, 1995; & Gay, 2002). Soloranzo & Yosso (2001) concur with this approach and assert that the perpetuation of deficit model thinking endures because there are no counterstories to challenge or disrupt mainstream thinking and bring alternative perspectives and interpretations into the dialogue. Thus, teacher education, White pre-service teachers, and the Black/African American students they serve, might benefit from the use of counternarratives.

Research Question Three: How do White pre-service teachers express their understanding of the impact of race on the teaching and learning process?

The findings from this study revealed that the White pre-service teachers expressed their understanding of the impact on race on the teaching and learning process on two fronts, 1) demonstrations and narrations of a color-blind approach to working with Black/African American students, and 2) their expressions that seemed to further transmit the master narrative. While it may be construed that there was a design flaw in this study

because the White pre-service teachers were not expressly asked to respond to race, it seems that within the framework of the multicultural course designed to address and confront race issues in education, that expressions about race would have been forthcoming. Additionally, because a few of the White pre-service teachers did expressly discuss race indicates the propensity that this was, indeed, a viable forum for a discussion about race.

Color-blind Approach

The color-blind approach to working with Black/African American students asserts that teachers don't see color and treat all students the same (Sleeter, 1993). Failure to "recognize" the race of Black/African American students infers that their race doesn't matter. In denying race, they were also denying their identity and heritage (Yosso, 2002). In doing so, White pre-service teachers were not able to recognize or include cultural resources inherent within the Black/African American communities. This was a detriment to both the Black/African American students, as well as the White pre-service teachers, as it created an informational void where there should be a fountain of knowledge.

Transmission of the Master Narrative

The White pre-service teachers seemed to participate in the transmission of the master narrative. Those transmissions were imbedded within the context of their narratives. While another section of this chapter more fully discusses White pre-service teachers' assumptions, it is of importance to also include reference to those assumptions in this section on race, as part of the master narrative includes descriptions of events conveyed by the dominant culture accompanied by the values and beliefs that generate the legacy of White racial privilege (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2002).

The White pre-service teachers' reflections conveyed assumptions "according to negative stereotypes about people of color (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2002, p. 29). While many White pre-service teachers expressed their surprise at the Black/African American students' levels of aptitude, diligence, and intellect, they did not confront themselves about why or how they had constructed those assumptions. In essence, they reflected on the performance of the Black/African American students, and not their own subjectivities, subjectivities based on the master narrative.

The master narrative speaks from a position of power. Few White pre-service teachers discussed the issue of power as it relates to Black/African Americans. One referenced being on "equal" grounds with a Black/African American friend in high school; however, did recognize the power of her position as a tutor in the Afterschool Program. Another student seemed to grow in understanding the power differential when he noted a change in the climate of the Afterschool Program and stated it was "as though we were all on the same level, and not teacher/student, but student/student". It can be concluded that the issue of power as it relates to race was not in the White pre-service teachers' consciousnesses as knowledge for reflection or discussion.

The White pre-service teachers were complicit in transmitting another part of the master narrative script in their failure to critique content and curriculum, particularly the ISTEP prep materials. While they conveyed their surprise at its difficulty, they did not challenge its relevance, purpose, or validity. While it is certainly a teacher's role to encourage students in being successful in their school work, as the White pre-service teachers did through a myriad of creative methods, they must also be trained with a critical eye about the nature of the content and challenge it when necessary.

Overall the White pre-service teachers appeared to approach working with the Black/African American students with a “color-blind” lens that did not recognize race. They appeared to support standardized testing and traditional forms of assessing knowledge and performance in addition to perceiving the Black/African American students from a culturally deficit model based on the White dominant cultures definition of cultural resources. While most seemed to only recognize the normative standards of behavior as legitimate, others seemed to grow in the area that valued alternative forms of expression.

So what? While some White pre-service teachers appeared to dislodge their stereotypical assumptions about working with Black/African American students, others did not. As a collective, they did not seem to challenge or critique the nature of purpose of schooling and how it systematically relegates Black/African American students to the margins. It is on these two fronts that teacher education must make stronger in roads.

Our nation’s Attorney General, Eric Holder , stated that “we are a nation of cowards” because “we, average Americans, simply do not talk enough with each other about things racial” (as cited by Thomas & Ryan, 2009, ¶3). While I would not assert that the White pre-service teachers are cowards, I would, however, suggest that, perhaps, they are not equipped with the necessary skills to adequately discuss race as it related to education.

According to McLaren (1998), one of the roles of a teacher is to serve as an agent of change who assists students in analyzing power, particularly the power imbalances in social structures. In order to do this, Cochran-Smith (1991) asserts that, “teachers need to know from the start that they are a part of a larger struggle and that they have a

responsibility to reform, not just replicate, standard school practices” (p. 280). She further argues that in order for pre-service teacher to understand their role as change agents they must reflect on the nature of schooling and issues of social justice.

Most of the White pre-service narratives were expressive and offered great detail about their experiences working with Black/African American students. They seemed excited about the teaching and learning process, as some narratives were written with great passion for education. I submit, that, if they were more attuned to the power differentials between Whites and Black/African American students and the socio-political issues that undergird the education of both Whites and Black/African Americans, their journals might be as reflective and descriptive in their advocacy for the education of Black/African American students.

Research Question Four: What do White pre-service teachers learn in afterschool tutoring programs in urban settings in which all students are Black/African American?

White Pre-service Teacher Learning

How can we know when learning has occurred? Dewey (1938) suggests that the educative process can be identified with growth. . . in the active principle of *growing* (p. 36). In this study the White pre-service teachers responded to two prompts that asked them to reflect on how what they “learned this week [will] impact [their] teaching practice in the future; and “of everything [they] did this week, what would [they] do differently given the chance to do it again?” When the White pre-service teachers explicitly indicated how they might do something differently in the future, or retrospectively indicated they would have changed something served as an indicator of

the potential for growth in future practice. While it might be difficult to project whether or not the White pre-service teachers will actually apply their newly constructed knowledge, it seemed that indicating their inclination toward growth and change, suggests that learning had occurred.

Additionally, White pre-service teachers' learning was expressed within the contexts of their narrative journals. While they might not have explicitly stated, "I learned. . . or I will do. . . differently in the future", an identification of growth is still possible through structural and contextual analysis of the journal entries. So, while there are expressions of "stated learning," there are also "inferences" to learning via the examination of the "growth" process.

Before a discussion about the White pre-service teachers' learning experiences, the following section further describes how learning is defined and will be referenced as it pertains to this study, particularly in relation to experiential learning.

Dewey's (1938) explains the growth (learning) process in relation to experiential learning in his assertion that "What [one] has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes the instrument of understanding and dealing with the situations that follow." (p. 44). This suggests that growth is a process, not a product, in essence a continuum of experiences and perceptions. Dewey recognizes that learning is a directional process, but argues that identifying "growth is not enough; we must also specify the direction in which growth takes place . . . Does. . . growth create conditions for further growth, or. . . does it shut off the person. . . from growth in a particular direction. . . as to leave a person arrested on a low plane of development, in a way which limits later capacity for growth?" (p. 36-38) He asserts,

The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. . . some experiences are mis-educative. . . [particularly experiences] that [have] the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (p. 25).

With an understanding that learning is a “growth” process with directional tendencies, it is from this perspective that the White pre-service teachers’ learning is discussed. The White pre-service teachers’ learning occurred within the realm of each identified categorical theme: Assumptions, Teaching and Learning, Relationships, Behavior/Discipline Issues, and Race. The White pre-service teachers’ learning experiences are discussed more deeply in the subsequent sections.

Assumptions

The White pre-service teachers’ first journal entries expressed many preconceptions about the types of Black/African American students they expected to be enrolled in the Afterschool Program. After their first day of tutoring, assumptions that the Black/African students would be rowdy, misbehaved, underachieving, “juvenile delinquents” were dissolved. The White pre-service teachers seemed to learn that their suppositions about Black/African American students’ behavior and academic acumen were inaccurate. By working with and observing the Black/African American students, the White pre-service teachers revealed growth. While not explicitly stated, it can be concluded that the Black/African American students taught the White pre-service teachers by assisting them in dislodging their pre-conceived notions.

It can be concluded that there was a spectrum of learning among the White pre-service teachers in regard to assumptions. While it appeared that White pre-service

teachers' initial assumptions had been dislodged; others backslid, and re-embraced their initial perspective; while others maintained additional assumptions that continued to perceive the Black/African American students from a deficit model. This was a mis-educative experience due to the White pre-service teachers' embrace of the deficit model perspective of the Black/African American students. The White pre-service teachers did not fully recognize the cultural wealth and resources that the Black/African American students brought with them to the Afterschool Program. This impeded the White pre-service teachers' learning, and did not allow for further growth and understanding of the Black/African American students, that might have been useful in further engaging the students in their learning processes

Teaching and Learning

The White pre-service teachers learned that actively engaging the students in meaningful activities enhanced the learning process for both the tutor and the Black/African American students. Additionally, when those creative techniques also employed sensitivity and responsiveness to the individual student, positive relationships were formed, resulting in conversations beyond the scope of the homework task at hand, and moved into dialogue of a more personal nature.

White pre-service teachers stated that they learned to be more proactive in engaging the students, expressing elements of responsibility for their roles in setting the tone for fostering a symbiotic approach to teaching. This was expressed through narratives that stated an interest in learning more about the students, and maintaining an open, non-judgmental posture in becoming more familiar with the Black/African students' individual needs and learning styles, in addition to making learning "fun". This

seems consistent with educators who advocate for culturally responsive approaches to teaching as the most productive approaches to working with Black/ African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2000; and Yosso, 2005).

These expressions of learning and growth appeared to be born through experience, the actual hands-on interactions with the students. The White pre-service teachers learned to expand on the creative techniques and responsive approaches that seemed to work with the Black/African American students. Furthermore, they indicated that they intended to bring this learning with them to their future teaching practice.

In contrast, a few White pre-service teachers had mis-educative experiences related to their teaching approaches with the Black/African American students, particularly when the methods they employed resulted in outcomes that did not meet their expectations. In these cases, the White pre-service teachers responses to the prompts designed to elicit reflections on future practice and doing things differently, were often devoid of reflection. From these omissions, it may be inferred that they had learning experiences that had “the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25).

The mis-educative experiences seemed to move the White pre-service teachers backwards. They seemed to re-embrace their initial assumptions and were not able to move beyond them within the twelve-week period. The reification of their initial assumptions not only further imbedded their assessment of the Black/African American students from a deficit model perspective, it also impeded their ability to be open and receptive to the students, which resulted in the failure to respond effectively in the

teaching and learning process. It also fostered misconceptions and misinterpretations about behavior and discipline issues.

Behavior/Discipline Issues

Again, the White pre-service teachers' learning fell along a continuum. Some White pre-service teachers learned to employ behavior modification techniques that resulted in positive outcomes. They also learned to craft counternarratives that speculated about Black/African American student "misbehavior" identifying environmental/program structural elements that might have not been the most conducive for student learning. Others seemed frustrated and at a loss as to why the Black/African American students were "misbehaving".

Some White pre-service teachers learned to employ preventive behavior management interventions by keeping students engaged through creative activities, while some used direct interventions that seemed to respectfully confront the misbehavior. When White pre-service teachers created productive learning environments, the term "preventative management interventions" might be an inappropriate description of what actually occurred. It seemed that when the focus was on learning, there was no "behavior to manage". Behavior was observed and described within the framework of teaching and learning activities.

Most White pre-service teachers learned to recognize their responsibility in behavior management and discipline because they felt that teachers set the tone in the teaching and learning process. In contrast, others seemed to project outward and blame the students. It appeared that the White pre-service teachers, who functioned from a culturally sensitive approach and one that honored student voice, seemed to be the most

successful in turning misbehavior into an educative experience and expressed less frustration with the students. They specifically identify this as an area of learning and stated they would employ those techniques in their future classrooms.

Relationships

The White pre-service teachers who shed their assumptions and maintained an open posture with the Black/African American students learned in ways that propelled them to expand their teaching methods, which in turn expanded their ability to forge productive relationships. For example, both Angela and Kale reported how they learned more and more about the Black/African American students by working with the same student for several weeks. Through this longitudinal experience, they were able to connect on a more personal level, and adapt teaching techniques to the Black/African American students' needs, such as creating flash cards and engaging in dialogue about the content. Some White pre-service teachers learned that in connecting with Black/African American students on a personal level, resulted was an enhancement of the teaching and learning processes.

While the White pre-service teachers learned about the importance of relationships, by expanding the dialogue beyond homework and the tasks at hand, it seemed that they arrived at a threshold with the potential to learn even more about the Black/African American students. While they learned about the importance of dialogue, they did not report dialogue regarding the Black/African American students' families and/or church communities. In failing to do so, they were unable to learn about the Black/African American students' cultural resources.

Race

It can be concluded that some of the White pre-service teachers had a mis-educative experience in regard to race. On individual levels, their approaches did not seem to recognize or legitimate the Black/African American students' culture or identity. Additionally, they did not convey the recognition of power in relation to race. Those who did explicitly discuss race, did so from an introspective position that focused on themselves and their roles in the teaching and learning process. They did not extend those reflections to the Black/African American students. While a few seemed to make inroads toward a discussion about race, they did not cross the threshold into reflections on race and racism as a systemic issue.

The White pre-service teachers learned to reinforce the master narrative in reflection, particularly in their perspectives about the nature and purpose of education. The absence of the presence of a discussion on race indicates that they failed to report on or recognize the impact of race on education. While this mis-educative experience might have been unconscious, it is certainly noteworthy, as it shines the light on the need for teacher education to take a stronger position in working toward social justice.

Teacher education might be well served to take a more proactive role in disrupting the master narrative. One method employed by other educators is the use of the counterstory. Sleeter (1995) employs an approach that puts the construction of the counterstories in the hands of the White pre-service teachers. The experiential component of the multicultural education course that she teaches, sends White pre-service teachers into communities with an assignment that requires them to work within local community agencies, interview community members, and then construct counternarratives that give

voice to the marginalized community members. The next step involves reproducing the collection of counternarratives in book form, and then using it as the text in the multicultural education class. This technique puts the learning in the hands of the students, and allows for open dialogue and discussion in which the White pre-service teachers share, discuss, challenge, and disrupt their individual and collective assumptions.

Maddox and Soloranzo (2002) employ a similar approach that combines a case study assignment with Friere's (1973) problem-posing method. The pre-service teachers research local communities and construct asset maps in order to help students identify cultural capital in the communities. Maddox and Soloranzo (2002) developed this approach based on the three phases of Freire's (1974) problem-posing methodology that includes naming the problem, analyzing the causes of the social problem, and finding solutions to the problem. Again, the pre-service teachers are active agents in their own knowledge construction, as opposed to simply being informed about social injustice in a lecture format.

In the above-mentioned methods, active dialogue occurs both within the classroom setting, and also within the communities themselves. As Freire (2000) suggests, dialogue is necessary in understanding other cultures, particularly cultures with histories of systemic oppression. Banks (2006) echoes this sentiment and asserts that "We have placed White teachers in multicultural settings and expect them to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their own life experiences, socialization patterns, worldviews and levels of racial identity" (p. 6). In order to confront this problem "meaningful dialogue across the differences of race and culture" may be able to assist pre-service teachers in necessary personal transformation processes.

Conclusions

From the data collected and analyzed, the researcher concluded that the White pre-service teachers had a spectrum of learning experiences. Some learned that their initial assumptions about Black/African American students were unfounded. Some were able to articulate this, while others were not. The latter simply indicated their surprise at the Black/African American students' academic acumen, without expressing their surprise at the imbedded nature of their assumptions. Some recognized that Black/African American students brought academic aptitude to the learning environment, along with a diligence and interest in learning. It appeared that some of the White pre-service teachers learned this over time throughout the duration of their twelve-week experience.

White pre-service teachers should invest some time in the address of their assumptions. This should be explored in a seminar style exercise based on their experiences in community-settings. These discussions should occur as issues arise and confronted throughout the semester. Dialogue of this nature can be fueled by the content in the reflective journals, in addition to general conversations about experiences at community-based settings. As issues arise, White pre-service teachers should name and explicitly identify their assumptions and the assumptions of their fellow pre-service teachers. Next, they should explore how, when, why, where and how these assumptions were created. They should challenge themselves and each other in an effort to dislodge their assumptions. Furthermore, the discussion should be expanded to explore and discuss how those assumptions interfere with the teaching and learning process of both themselves, and the students they serve. It is one thing to recognize that an assumption exists, and quite another to determine how those assumptions play out in the classroom

and the field of education in terms of interfering with the teaching and learning processes. These dialogues should be ongoing and recursive throughout the community-based experiences culminating with a comparison and contrast exercise that helps them review and reflect on the progress they have made during the course of the semester.

While some of the White pre-service teachers discarded their initial assumptions about the Black/African American student's lack of academic acumen, they did embrace other preconceptions that viewed the Black/African American students from deficit model perspectives. Within the narrations that communicated deficit model perspectives, were also speculations and reflections about how and why the Black/African American students did not appear to behave within the normative standards of the White dominant culture. The presence of reflection and speculation suggests that the White pre-service teachers might have been receptive to further growth and understanding about the Black/African American students had they been given the opportunity to dialogue about their assumptions in a seminar manner that included the construction of counternarrative approaches that illuminated alternative ways of understanding.

Teacher education and multicultural education courses should respond and intervene throughout experiential learning components to discuss potential counternarratives to White pre-service teachers assumptions about Black/African American students and events that occur in community-based settings. There should be a particular focus on the context and social settings of the communities. This counternarrative approach should include focusing on identifying assets within the communities. Every "negative" aspect voiced by a pre-service teacher should be consciously re-framed and discussed as a potential attribute, preferably by a fellow White

pre-service teacher who has expressed an alternative view of a student or situation. This approach would empower the White pre-service teachers by allowing them the agency to re-define their interpretations. Furthermore, this would help White pre-service teachers learn to recognize and build on these attributes in their work with the Black/African American students from the communities.

The findings revealed that the White pre-service teachers recognized the importance of building relationships with the Black/African American students. Teacher education should expand on this by encouraging White pre-service teachers in the exchange of stories about the relationships they build in the community-based settings. They should thoroughly describe those experiences in detail in a forum or seminar. This should be designed to occur within the multicultural education courses themselves. This way, the White pre-service teachers are able to convey how symbiotic relationships were formed, learn from each other, and also learn to engage in dialogue among themselves as a tool that can be useful in their future teaching careers.

Another discussion piece that should be included in the forum and seminar is behavior and discipline. This should be addressed from a self-reflective position posing questions to themselves that ask, "What could I have done differently in this situation? Or How did my actions evoke a certain response?" This suggestion is based on the continuum of pre-service teacher narrations that responded to behavior and discipline issues in a variety of manners. Some recognized that they were responsible for setting the tone, while others projected outwardly and blamed the students. To circumvent this and enhance pre-service teacher learning, they should share their experiences in dialogue in a seminar setting, with attention to how their attitudes, actions and behaviors impact the

learning environment, perhaps, they will be made aware of more options. They might learn creative teaching techniques and preemptive interventions that diminish the potential of behavior problems in learning environments.

Community partners have a lot to offer the field of teacher education. They should be included in the design and implementation of the experiential components required of White pre-service teachers. They should be equal participants. Community partners know the children, their families and community members. They bring valuable information about the children enrolled in their programs. Community partners should be at the table in planning and facilitating experiential learning components in which White pre-service teachers are engaged. Their involvement should include both formative and summative reviews of the White pre-service teachers serving at their community centers.

White pre-service teachers should receive more training prior to and throughout their community-based experiences. If White pre-service teachers are engaged in community-based settings that include active participation as tutors or other hands-on activities, they should be given proper guidance and training on an ongoing basis. This would include symbiotic communication between the community settings and the university partners. Community partners and teacher educators should maintain communication and feedback during the course of the semester. After the initial orientation and introduction to the community setting, perhaps a few weeks into the experiential learning component, the White pre-service teachers should have a review of their participatory work, and additional training in the tasks that they have been assigned to do at the community centers.

Community partners should also be invited to attend the seminars and dialogues that occur in the university settings. Community partners have a lot to offer pre-service teachers. They can be instrumental in helping them become more culturally aware, sensitive, and responsive through a symbiotic exchange of information throughout the community-based learning experiences.

Some of the White pre-service teachers learned, through their experiences that the Black African/American students responded well to teaching approaches that were innovative, creative, and tailored to the specific needs of individual Black/African American students. When creative approaches were employed in combination with dialogue that went beyond the homework tasks at hand, and included conversation about the Black/African American students' outside interests, the White pre-service teachers learned that productive relationships which led to productive working relationships, were formed. The other end of the learning spectrum included the White pre-service teachers who were unable to make the connection between their lack of cultural responsiveness and a result that did not include the development of productive relationships. Those White pre-service teachers who were frustrated with the Black/African American students, and did not seem able to recognize that their deficiencies in cultural awareness resulted in their inability to work effectively with the Black/African American students.

The White pre-service teachers who were not able to dislodge their assumptions and respond to the students in culturally sensitive manners, did not reflect on their responsibilities, but projected blame onto the students and identified the Black/African American students as being disinterested and/or unmotivated in learning. These White pre-service teachers did not learn to reflect on their attitudes and teaching approaches. In

these instances the White pre-service teachers were frustrated and at a loss for how to work with the Black/African American students.

Further dialogue should include discussion about “frustrations” in the community-based settings. These do not need to be formed from negative deficit approaches. They are opportunities to learn and grow. Pre-service teachers should be explicitly taught about cognitive dissonance, not only how students experience cognitive dissonance when they are learning something new, but also the dissonance that they experience as educators. Dissonance is a pivotal point, as it often occurs prior to a learning breakthrough. Identify this phenomenon. Share this with White pre-service teachers. Cognitive dissonance awareness is a wonderful tool as it helps us recognize that we are on the cusp of a learning breakthrough.

White pre-service teachers are not alone in their frustrations. Teaching education literature is riddled with publications about the deficits that White pre-service teachers allegedly bring to the teaching and learning environment when working with Black/African American students. I submit that these publications be explicitly shared with the White pre-service teachers. Put them on the table for discussion. Make it safe to be frustrated. Introduce this concept in a group forum so that White pre-service teachers are not experiencing these challenges in isolation. Put the analysis of the publications in the hands of the White pre-service teachers who are being studied and defined. It seems that a straightforward approach might serve them well, in addition to other methods that require self-reflection.

Some, but little reflection was revealed in the areas of curriculum, assessment, and the context and norms of the school, or the contextual setting of the Afterschool

Program. Teacher education should ensure that pre-service teachers are trained to recognize that power plays a role in the education of children. They should be schooled to recognize how that power plays out at both a systemic level, as well as in the technical aspects of the methods they use within their classrooms. Because the White pre-service teachers in this study did not seem to recognize the social and ethical layers imbedded in the execution of their teaching methods, they should be taught to do so.

Overall, the White pre-service teachers exhibited a color-blind approach to their interactions with the Black/African American students. Because their reflections, for the most part, did not explicitly discuss race and racism, it can be concluded that their racism manifested at an unconscious level. While some reflection did occur, it can be concluded that the White pre-service teachers were, again, capable of dialogue in this area, given the opportunity for discussions in this area.

In addition to a color-blind perspective about Black/African American students, the White pre-service teachers adhered to the master narrative in their reflections by supporting standardized testing and other elements of schooling per the construct of the White dominant culture. They did not challenge or critique the content of the schoolwork required of the Black/African American students, and appeared to respond to the materials as if the materials were non-biased and neutral.

While the White pre-service teachers' experiences resulted in an increased understanding about working with Black/African American students, they could benefit from more information about the systemic nature of racism through dialogue and additional experiential learning in order to work for social justice. According to Ladson-Billings, (2001) "[T]eachers cannot become these agents of change by merely fulfilling

the requirements of higher education service learning experiences. . . [They] need the opportunity to not only participate in community service but to receive help in understanding their community service” (p. 106).

Recommendations

Based on findings in this study, it is recommended that teacher education continue to partner with local community agencies in the preparation of teachers. It might be helpful to include more voice and contribution from the communities themselves, as it appeared that the White pre-service teachers indicated a receptivity to learning more about the Black/African American student with whom they worked.

Teacher education programs, its White pre-service teachers, and the Black/African American students in community-based tutoring programs that partner with universities, would be well-served in assisting White pre-service teachers develop culturally responsive teaching strategies prior to the sending them into the communities to serve as tutors. The findings from this study indicate that when the White pre-service teachers did not employ teaching methods responsive to the needs of the Black/African American students, the White pre-service teachers became frustrated with the students, and were unable to reflect on their deficiencies in teaching skills. They blamed the Black/African American students. Thus, the White pre-service teachers further embraced deficit model preconceptions about the Black/African American students.

Based on the spectrum of levels of reflectivity, it is suggested that White pre-service teachers receive further instruction about the art of reflection, specifically at the social/political and moral/ethical levels. In expanding their ability to reflect on a wider scale, perhaps, they might be able to confront and challenge the inequalities inherent in

the social structure of education in the United States. An additional consideration regarding reflection is to expand those reflections beyond the written journals. Written reflections should be followed by dialogue within the classroom in a seminar manner. This technique allows for White pre-service teachers to share their experiences and perspectives within the group, rather than processing those experiences in isolation. However, the dialogue should not stop there. White pre-service teachers should also be encouraged to construct counternarratives within the framework of the seminar discussions. Rather than simply reading and/or hearing about structural inequalities and prejudice, this forum would put the learning in their hands as active participants in the construction of their own learning. And finally, this component would not be complete without the active participation of the community members or agencies to which the White pre-service teachers are dispatched. It is imperative that the voices of the community members are included in this dialogue.

Based on the findings from this study about the development of relationships between White pre-service teachers and Black/African American students, it is recommended that teacher education programs offer more opportunities for experiences in community-based tutoring programs. Those experiences should include one-on-one interactions between prospective White teachers and Black/African American students on a regular and consistent basis. It appeared that, over time, the White pre-service teachers benefited by working with the same Black/African American student because they were able to know them on a deeper more personal level, beyond the homework tasks at hand. Additionally, according to the White pre-service teachers, the Black/African American

students also benefited by responding to their presence in a positive manner that fostered homework completion.

Without question, introducing pre-service teachers to the tenets of Critical Race Theory should be a staple in teacher education programs. While Critical White Studies focuses on helping teachers understand the implications of privileged pigmentation, it is only one step toward addressing the racism, Critical White Studies does not get beyond the identification of the problem to address the issue, teaching for social justice.

Critical Race Theory is not only a theory, it is an activist movement. It not only identifies the issue of racism, but also works for confronting and eliminating it. While pre-service teachers might not be receptive, initially, to this concept, at least they would be made aware of it. Perhaps, with that awareness, when they subsequently land in schools as teachers, they will be better equipped to identify the manifestations of racism as they navigate school environments.

Similar studies designed to understand what White pre-service teachers learn working with Black/African American students should be conducted on an ongoing basis. An alteration to this study design should include a more Action Research approach in that the White pre-service teachers' journals could be explored throughout the duration of the experiential learning component of the introductory multicultural education class. This approach might assist the White pre-service teachers confronting and disrupting their participation of the transmission of the master narrative, in addition to helping each other in the process.

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Appendix A

Personal Culture Learning Through Reflection

Journal Writing: Personal culture learning can be more easily facilitated by keeping a log of your observations, thoughts, reactions, and conclusions throughout your experiences. A journal will enable you to accomplish several objectives, including:

- assisting you in developing your skills in observation, reflection, and interpretation (identified as one of THE major skills of successful teachers – Weiner, 2005)
- providing you with a record of your observations and activities, thus making it easier for you to prepare formal reports and presentations (e.g., your portfolio artifact)
- providing you a basis for discussion and further reflection, which may help you better understand the outcomes of your experiences.
- providing a written record tracking your personal growth as an educator.
- identifying patterns in things that keep cropping up (becoming more aware of your habitual practices and reactions is an important step in examining your own personal assumptions about teaching, learning and the students with whom you interact - Brookfield, 1995).

Directions: At this point you would like us to tell you HOW LONG this reflection should be. Instead, we want you to know: You should spend approximately 20-30 minutes writing as soon as possible after a lab experience. Record any details that are remembered with particular vividness. To “prime the pump” for you, we provided several prompts below. Please provide a brief, but THOUGHTFUL, response to each question, but you are not limited to just these topics. You should write about anything that feels significant, even if you’re not sure why and even if it doesn’t fit under any of these questions.

Remember this is a tool for your personal educational journey. As teachers in training and future educators, it is important to remember that we are never done learning, reflecting and improving our practice. This simple tool is a guide to assist in that process.

1. What was the moment (or moments) this week when I felt most connected, engaged or affirmed as a teacher – when I said to myself, “This is what being a teacher is really all about.” Why?
2. What was the moment (or moments) this week when I felt most disconnected, disengaged, or bored as a teacher – when I said to myself, “I am just going through the motions here.” Why?
3. What was the situation that caused me the greatest anxiety or distress? Why?
4. What was the event that took me by surprise – an event where I saw or did something that shook me up, caught me off guard, gave me a jolt, or made me unexpectedly happy? Why?
5. Of everything I did this week in my teaching what would I do differently if I had the chance to do it again? Why?
6. What do I feel proudest of in my teaching activities this week? Why?
7. How will what I learned this week impact my teaching practice in the future?

Due: Within 36 hours of your lab experience.

Send to: xxx@yahoo.com. No attachments, please! Type in Word first, spell check, then cut and paste into the body of the email. Make sure your name is in the body, also.

Appendix B

Contact Information – Please Print

Name _____

Campus Address _____
 Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Home Address _____
 Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone Numbers _____
 Campus _____
 Cell _____
 Home _____

Contact Information – Please Print

Name _____

Campus Address _____
 Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Home Address _____
 Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone Numbers _____
 Campus _____
 Cell _____
 Home _____

Appendix C



Institutional Review Board

DATE: April 22, 2009

TO: Barbara Boznak, ED.D.

FROM: Ball State University IRB

RE: IRB protocol # 98837-1

TITLE: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ON THEIR EXPERIENCES AS TUTORS IN AN URBAN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM: A CRITICAL RACE THEORY ANALYSIS

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: April 22, 2009

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on April 22, 2009 and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. **Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project.** Please contact Amy Boos at (765) 285-5034 or akboos@bsu.edu if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (<http://www.bsu.edu/irb>) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.

Appendix D

Email Recruitment Script

Subject: EDMUL 205 Requesting Permission

Dear _____,

You might not remember me, but I was the graduate assistant when you were an EDMUL 205 student tutoring at Union Missionary Baptist Church. I am requesting to review your written journal entries from EDMUL 205 for research purposes. In order to do that, I am requesting your written permission. I am contacting you to obtain your current mailing address in order to send a consent form to you. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. All of the information about the study will be outlined on the consent form, which will be mailed to you. The title of the study is: Pre-Service Teachers' Reflections on their Experiences as Tutors in an Urban Afterschool Program: A Critical Race Theory Analysis.

Do you have any questions?

What is your current mailing address?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Barb Boznak

Telephone Recruitment Script

Hi _____,

You might not remember me, but I was the graduate assistant when you were an EDMUL 205 student tutoring at Union Missionary Baptist Church. I am requesting to review your written journal entries from EDMUL 205 for research purposes. In order to do that, I am requesting your written permission. I am contacting you to obtain your current mailing address in order to send a consent form to you. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. All of the information about the study will be outlined on the consent form. The title of the study is: Pre-Service Teachers' Reflections on their Experiences as Tutors in an Urban Afterschool Program: A Critical Race Theory Analysis.

Do you have any questions?

What is your current mailing address?

Thank you.

Appendix E

Research Participant Informed Consent Form

It has been well over a year since we were dispatched to the Academic Achievers Afterschool Program. As promised, I am contacting you to obtain your permission/consent to access the weekly written journals you created in the Multicultural Education 205 course in the fall of 2007 for research purposes. The purpose of this research project is to understand how pre-service teachers process their learning experiences when dispatched into settings in which they are the racial minority. The title of this study is "Pre-Service Teachers' Reflections on their Experiences as Tutors in an Urban Afterschool Program: A Critical Race Theory Analysis."

To be eligible to participate in this study, you must have been enrolled in the Multicultural Education course number 205 in the fall of 2007 and dispatched as a tutor to the Union Missionary Baptist Church.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at anytime for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions of me at any time during the study. All data will be maintained as confidential and no identifying information such as names will appear in any publication or presentation of the data. Data will be stored and secured electronically on the researcher's password-protected computer for one year and, then deleted. There will be no paper copies of any portion of the data. Only the principle research investigator will have access to the data.

There are no anticipated risks to your participation in this study. Should you choose to provide your consent for permission to access your written work for research purposes, you may opt out of participation at any time during the course of the project by notifying me via email. Should you experience any stress or anxiety in relation to this study, there are counseling services available through the Counseling Practicum Clinic in the Teachers' College, (765) 285-8047.

You will be notified of the completion of the project through email, and the written report will be made available to you upon request. The anticipated time of completion is June 29, 2009.

Should you consent to participate in this study, please complete the attached form and return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my faculty supervisor at anytime using the contact information below.

For one's rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: Research Compliance, Sponsored Programs Office, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu.

Consent

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project entitled, "Pre-Service Teachers' Reflections on their Experiences as Tutors in an Urban Afterschool Program: A Critical Race Theory Analysis." I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate. I understand that I will receive a copy of this informed consent form to keep for future reference.

To the best of my knowledge, I meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation (described on the previous page) in this study.

 Participant's Signature

 Date
Researcher Contact Information

Principal Investigator:

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